

L. 12. 44

SEVEN
SERMONS

Preach'd upon
Several Occasions.

To which is added,



The Golden Rule ;

OR,

The Royal Law of Equity
EXPLAINED.

By JOHN GOODMAN, D. D.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Robert Clavel*, at the *Peacock* ;
and *Luke Meredith*, at the *Star* in
St. Paul's Church-yard, 1697.



1266:90

T O T H E
Right Reverend Father in God,

H E N R Y

Lord Bishop of L O N D O N,

One of the Lords of His MAJESTY'S
Most Honourable Privy-Council.

M Y L O R D,

W*Hen I composed the following
Sermon, at Your Lordship's
Command, I propounded no o-
ther thing to my self, but the doing service
to the Souls of Men, by inviting them into
the Communion of the Church of Christ;
and the animating and encouraging my Bre-
thren of the Clergy, that labour in the same
good and holy Work. Than which two things,
I knew nothing more seasonable and neces-
sary for the Age we live in, or more com-
pliant with Your Lordship's Design in your
Visitation. And therefore, though I had
a just Reverence of the Auditory, and a
due sense of my own Imperfections; yet the
afore-*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

aforesaid Consideration, together with that of Your Lordship's Candour, would not suffer me much to doubt but that the Sermon would be approved by Your Lordship, and accepted by all good and wise Men that heard it.

For I call'd to mind, that as the Greeks say of their Goddesses Ἰατρία, Dea, Bona valetudo, placatur quâcunque re quis velit ei litare: so, however weak and sickly Minds (like cachectick Bodies) may be nice, fantastick and captious; yet those that are sound and strong, are benign and generous; and with such, every thing that is sober, and well-intended, is well taken.

*Nevertheless, I must acknowledge, that when afterwards Your Lordship declared your Pleasure that I should print my Sermon, methought the case was altered: for being sensible before, how difficult a matter it was, to contrive so copious a Subject (as I had before me) within the limits of an hour's Discourse, I was easily aware how much harder it would be (in so narrow a compass) to satisfie all the Scruples and Curiosities of those that should not only have a transcient glympse, but a leisurely perusal. And besides, I was not ignorant how different the condition of a Sermon was, when presented in dead letters, from it self,
when*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

when enlivened by the voice and Passion of a very mean Orator.

But after all, I considered it was my Duty, not to dispute, but to Obey, and that Your Lordship's Judgment was sufficient for my security. And therefore (all Excuses set aside) I here humbly present to your hand, what before I presented in your hearing.

And now, My Lord, having this Opportunity, I crave leave, not only to make Acknowledgment of my own peculiar Obligations to Your Lordship, (which I do with a just sense of Duty and Gratitude,) but to report the Apprehensions of your Clergy in these parts of your Diocese, and the great Contentment they are under Your Lordship's Government. We are greatly comforted by your Zeal for the Protestant Religion; encouraged by Your Lordship's vigilant Care of their Interests and Concerns; directed in their Studies, Ministry and Conversation, by your prudent Counsels; animated by so great an Example; and especially obliged by the Benignity of your Presence and Condescension to them at your Visitation. All which they cannot forbear to express such a sense of, that they look upon it as a great Blessing of Almighty God, in committing this part of his Church to Your Lordship's Care and Government.

For,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

For, My Lord, we cannot doubt but Piety and Devotion will commend it self to all that are serious : that Paternal Mildness and Clemency will work upon the ingenuous : that well-temper'd Severity is the way to reclaim the vicious : and that Charity and Generosity will oblige all humane Nature. And therefore, where there is such a conjunction of real and powerful Causes, we are able easily to calculate happy and signal Effects ; as, that the Church shall recover its native and ancient Glory, and the Genius of this great People be marvelously improved. Which Successes that it will please the Great and True Oecumenical Bishop to crown Your Lordship's Endeavours with, is the ardent Desire of

(My LORD)

HADHAM,
Septemb. 7.
1677.

Your Lordship's

most Dutiful and

Obedient Servant,

J. Goodman.

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A
SERMON

Preached at

Bishops-Stortford, Aug. 29. 1677.

Before the

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

H E N R Y,

Lord Bishop of *London.*

S. Matthew xvi. 18.

*Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock
I will build my Church; and the
Gates of Hell shall not prevail
against it.*

Amongst the Manifold infirmities
of humane Nature, there is scarcely
any either more Epidemical and
common in Experience, or more mischie-

B

vous

vous in its Effects and Consequences, than that which the *Greeks* very elegantly express by the name of Ἀμελεία τῆς ἀνδραλῆς, and which I know not how more fitly to render, than by calling it *an Humour of running from one Extream to another*: when men apprehending the evil and unreasonableness of some Opinion or Practice, are so far transported with zeal in detestation of it, as that, passing by the Mean of Truth and Sobriety, they rest not till they have fixed upon something else quite contrary thereto, though it be every whit as bad as that which they studiously seek to decline. *As if the utmost distance from what they are confident is false, were the only security that what they embrace is true.*

And perhaps, if we well observe, we shall find that most of those Evils which have deformed Religion, and troubled the Peace of the Church of God, have entered at this door. For evidence of which, amongst very many observations which I have at hand to this purpose, I will specify these two or three, which (I perswade my self) will neither be unacceptable to this Learned Auditory, nor remote from the business in hand.

The first Instance shall be the rise of *Arrianism*: touching which, it hath been

been the opinion of sundry wise men, and of the Learned Lord *Bacon* in particular, that that most unhappy Controversy sprang at first from an Antipathy to the Polytheism of the Pagans. Some men, it seems, being highly sensible of the intolerable prostitution of the Divine Majesty, when the Honours peculiar to him were communicated with and shared amongst so many petty pretended Deities, out of zeal against this evil, out-ran the mark, and, that they might be sure to Worship but one God, acknowledged but one Person; and so whilst they went about to subvert Idolatry, denied the Trinity.

My second Instance shall be the observation of our Learned *Hooker*, to this effect: When some German Divines had strained their form of Presbyterian Government to a mighty height, had railed in the Communion with such strict Cautions and Conditions, that (the most part of Christians being secluded from it) it became more like a private Mass than the solemn Worship of the Church; and, to carry on this design the better, had brought in Lay-elders, as a new kind of *Censores Morum*, up starts *Erastus*, and provoked by this Extreme, runs a risk, and falls into another as bad: for not

Hooker in
Pref. to
Eccl. Polit.

content to disprove that new form of Discipline, and especially to degrade that novel Office, he proceeds to the denial of all Church-Censure and Ecclesiastical Government. *As if from such time as the Civil State became Christian, the Rights of the Church were escheated to the Prince or State.* And thus, as that Judicious person modestly expresses it, *the Truth was divided between the contending parties, but overseen and outran by both.*

But the last Instance I will now make use of comes more home to my present business. When the Church of *Rome*, arrogating to it self an Infallibility, and asserting to the Pope an universal Pastorship, had under these pretences notoriously usurped upon all Christendome; there were not wanting those, who, seeing through this cheat, and desirous to reform all, bent things so far towards the other Extreme, that they endangered the breaking of all in pieces.

For whereas the *Roman* Church had claimed and exercised an exorbitant power of making and imposing what Articles of Faith she pleased; These were so far from that, as that they would scarcely allow the Church authority to define matters of Order and *Decorum*. Because the Governours

Governours in the *Roman* Communion were arrived at too great a height, the Bishops becoming (like the *Ephori* among the *Spartans*) able to check and controll Sovereign Princes; therefore, to avoid this danger, all shall be levelled to a Plebeian Parity. Before the interest of the Church was so great, as that it drew (under one pretence or other) almost all Causes from the Civil Tribunals to Ecclesiastical cognizance: but now to prevent this for the future, all Jurisdiction shall be taken from it. In short, the Church was thought to be too rich before, *Religio pepererat Divitias, & filia devoraverat matrem*: now therefore the only way to revive the Primitive Purity, is to reduce the Primitive Poverty. And so upon the whole matter, from an abhorrence of the Incroachments and Exorbitancies of the *Roman* Church, there arose a danger whether there should be any Church at all.

Now considering with my self how to obviate these and several other mischiefs of like nature, and to doe the best service I can to this Solemnity, I have made choice of these words of our Saviour for my subject, *Thou art Peter, and upon, &c.*

Wherein I observe these three things.

1. A Resolution or Decree of our Saviour, he will *build him a Church.*
2. The Foundation of this Structure, *Upon this Rock will I, &c.*
3. His Prediction of the Success and Duration of this Building, *The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

I design to open these three things with the greatest plainness and perspicuity I can, because of the importance and usefulness of the matter ; and yet with as much brevity as is possible, for I consider I speak to wise Men.

PART I. Touching the First, (to avoid all impertinence,) that which I conceive our Saviour means when he saith he will build him a Church, is no more nor less than this, That he will incorporate all those that profess his Name and Religion into a Society. And that he will not content himself to have Disciples and Followers dividedly straggling after him, (how numerous so ever they may be,) but he will have them united into a Body, formed into a regular Society, make up a Divine Polity, having Unity, Order and Government amongst themselves. That as there are several forms of Civil Society of Humane Institution ;

tion; so our Saviour would by his Divine Authority institute a Religious Society by the name of *a Church*, whereof He himself would be the Head, and which should be ruled and governed by Laws and Officers peculiar to it self. Or, as in the Old Testament the whole Nation of the *Jews* (though distinguished otherwise by their respective Tribes and Families) made up one People and Church of *Israel*; so should all Nations upon Earth and every individual person that was a Christian, conspire and make up together one Christian Church.

For the more distinct and satisfactory apprehension whereof, let us consider, that every regular Society requires these four things; namely, 1. A Body, 2. An Head, 3. Union, 4. Order and Government: and all these conspicuously concur to the making up the Church, or such a Society as we have described.

1. For the Body of the Christian Church, that consists of all those who from time to time in all Ages and Countreys are inrolled in *Albo Christianorum*, and have given up their names to *Christ*, or are Christians by profession. So the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Now are ye the Body of Christ and Members in particular;*

Vid. Theo-
phyl. in loc.

that is, the whole number of Christians makes up the mystical Body of *Christ*, every individual person being a particular Member thereof. And then he adds, verſ. 28. *God hath ſet ſome in the Church, firſt Apoſtles, ſecondly Prophets, &c.* By which it is evident that he ſpeaks of the whole Church as one : for he ſuppoſes the Apoſtles to be Officers of the whole Chriſtian Church, which could not be, if every little parcel of Chriſtians convened together made up a Church in the notion the Apoſtle intends; and conſequently therefore the whole number of Chriſtians (as I ſaid) muſt make up the one Church or Body of *Chriſt*.

To this purpoſe, thoſe that are curious obſervers of the propriety of phraſe in the *Greek* tongue do note, that at *Athens*, (from whoſe Aſſemblies this name *Εκκλησία* was firſt taken) when only the Heads or chief Magiſtrates were aſſembled, they called this diſtinctly *Σύγκλησις* when the *Colluvies ex agris* or whole Rabble of People was called together, this they termed *Διάκλησις* but *Εκκλησία* was only uſed when the whole Body of Citizens within the Pale or Liberties of the City were aſſembled.

2. *Christ Jesus* is undoubtedly the Head and Supreme of this Body. He is the Founder of this Order, he gave command for the forming this Society, prescribes Laws and affords protection to it. *Eph. 5. 23. He is the Head of the Church, and the Saviour of the Body.* And herein that which Divines call the *Mediatorian Kingdom* of our Saviour properly consists: namely, that not only in respect of his Divine Nature he hath a Sovereignty over the world; but especially that as Θεάνθρωπος, or God incarnate, he is Sovereign of the Church, and hath power of Legislation, authority to constitute Officers under him, *jus vitæ & necis*, hath all Judgment committed to him, can sentence to life or to utter destruction. Whether *de facto* he hath appointed any Lieutenant or Vicar-general under him over the whole Church, as some pretend, will not be necessary now to inquire; and besides, will be sufficiently clear in the Negative by what I shall say by and by.

3. It is not sufficient to an orderly Society, that there be Head and Members, but there must be some Ligaments, to the end that there may be Union; that is, that all those Members of this Society, which lie otherwise scattered through so many

many Ages and Countreys, may both become united together, to make up one Body, and also joyned to their common Head *Christ Jesus*.

Now as in the natural Body the Nerves which perform this office proceed from the Head, so it is here; *Christ Jesus* hath delivered an Institution of Religion, the open profession of which is the Sinew of this Society, the Church: namely, all those that hold and maintain the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and especially of the New Testament, are united to the Church as Members, and to *Christ* as their spiritual Head. For this is the Charter of our Corporation, and contains the Laws of our Society: he that adds to this, distracts and divides the Church: and he that abates or diminishes it, incroaches upon the Prerogative of *Christ* the Head. The Church of *Christ*, and the profession of the Religion of *Christ* are of equal extent, and the Holy Scripture is the Standard of both.

But as a symbolical representation of this Union (we are speaking of,) or rather as a standing federal Rite of this Society, our Lord *Christ* hath also appointed the frequent participation of the holy Sacrament, wherein we solemnly recognize

nize him our Head, and our Fellow-Christians as Members of the same Body: which therefore is properly called the *Synaxis* or *Communion*. To which purpose the Apostle, allusively to the New Testament, speaks of the Church of the Jews, *1 Cor. 10. 2, &c. they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the Sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, &c.* But more clearly and expressly of the Christian Church, *vers. 17. For we being many are one Body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.* The sense of which place, and the summ of what I have been saying, is this, That as by holding and professing the Religion of *Christ Jesus* contained in the Holy Scripture we are united to him, and Members of his Church, materially; so it is our duty that this be solemnly and formally executed by those holy Rites of his institution.

4. But in the fourth and last place, it is not sufficient that there be an Union of the Head and Members, but there must be Order also amongst the Members themselves, otherwise it would be a Multitude, but not a Church. Wherefore in this Society, though, as we have said, all that profess and acknowledge the Doctr-
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rine of the Scriptures are Members, yet some of those are of an higher quality, and more publick use and influence, than others, namely such as bear Office in this Society. So saith the Apostle, *Eph. 4. 11. He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, εἰς κατασκευὴν τοῦ σώματος αἱγιαίου, i. e. for the orderly knitting of the Saints together into a Body, and for the edifying that Body of Christ.* These and their Successors are the Governours and Officers of the Church as a Church, or as it is such a peculiar, distinct and spiritual Society. To these the Head of this Society hath promised *his presence to the end of the world*; to these he hath given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, saying, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, &c.* and, *He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that refuseth you refuseth him that sent me.* These, as I said, are the Governours of the Church as a Church. But because (as it was well observed by *Optatus Milevitanus*) *Res publica non est in Ecclesia, sed Ecclesia in Republica*; and it was not the design of our Saviour, in constituting this Society of a Church, to revoke or abrogate the Powers and Authority of the Civil State: therefore Kings and Princes (though

(though as such they are not properly Officers of the Church in its peculiar consideration, yet) have and retain their ancient right of Legislation, and prescribing to the external management of this Society. In which respect it was said by the great and famous *Constantine*, that he was Ἐπίσκοπος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, that is, a Civil Bishop, or, as we commonly speak, supreme Governour or Moderator of the Church.

And now, having shewed what our Saviour meant, when he said he would build him a Church, it will neither be difficult nor unusefull to shew the Reasons of this Institution, *i. e.* Why our Saviour would not leave every single Believer upon his own score, but would have them associated and incorporated as aforesaid. The great usefulness of this Institution might easily be made appear in very many Instances: but I will mention but these three.

I. It pleased our Saviour *Christ* to require such a conjunction and combination of Christians, to the intent that by that means they might be the better able to hold up his Truth and Religion in the world. For if this had been left to the care of particular Christians singly and separately

separately, such is the diversity of their Capacities and Apprehensions, so different have been their Educations, are their Interests, and would be their Expressions, and so great would be the difficulty of holding intelligence and correspondence with each other, that it is not imaginable how the mind of *Christ* should have been uniformly and intirely represented to all those that would have been concerned in it: therefore in regard this summ was too great to be laid out upon private security, it pleased him to deliver this great *Depositum* to the Society of the Church.

This is that which I take to be meant in that famous passage of the Apostle, *1, Tim. 3. 15.* where the Church is called *ἑστύλος καὶ ἐδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας*, *the pillar and ground of Truth*. I know well what perverse use they of the Church of *Rome* make of this Text, and what pitifull shifts some on the other side make to avoid that danger; and therefore I thought it worth my labour, in a former Discourse of this nature, and at a like Solemnity, to vindicate the Text from the hands of those that abuse it, and the world by it. But at present it is sufficient to intimate, that though it be evidently true, that the
truth

truth of Christianity neither depends upon the Authority, nor needs the Warranty of men, yet was the Society of the Church a wise Expedient of our Saviour, for the holding forth and holding up his Religion in the world.

Nor let any one suspect that this will give any countenance to the unwritten Traditions of the Church of *Rome*, or evacuate the just Dignity and Authority of the Holy Scriptures: for it is and must be acknowledged, that the written Word is the immediate Conservatory of the Truth of the Gospel; yet the Society of the Church doth the same thing remotely and generally, which the other doth particularly and immediately: that is to say, this holds up the Holy Scripture, preserves and assures that as the Summ and Code of our Religion; as on the other hand the Holy Scriptures rules to us the particular Doctrines and Laws thereof. To which sense both *S. Austin* and *S. Jerom* agree, when they affirm, that as the *Jewish* Church was *Columna Nubis*, the Pillar of a Cloud, or was incorporated by God to hold up that Ceremonial form of Religion in the Old Testament; so the Society of the Christian Church is *Colum-*

na

na *Lucis*, or was instituted to hold up that Truth whereof the former was a shadow, namely the Doctrine of the Gospel, in the times of the New Testament. And Saint *Austin* more particularly expresses himself in his 42. Epistle, *Radix Christianæ Societatis, per Sedes Apostolorum & Successiones Episcoporum, certa per orbem propagatione diffunditur: i. e.* Christian Religion is preserved and propagated by the advantage of established Order and successive Government of the Church.

2. *Christ Jesus* would have a Church, and his Disciples imbodyed and formed into a Society, that, by means of such conjunction and relation, they might be more usefull to one another, by instruction, admonition, counsel, reproof, and example; and so not only hold up the Doctrine joyntly, but hold one another mutually to the practice of Christianity, as having a common care and concern for the good of each other, for the sake of the whole.

To which purpose it is observed by the generality of Learned men, that *Gen. 4. 26.* and *6. 1.* in the Infancy of the World, there was a distinction between the Sons of God and the Sons of men: by the latter

ter of which they understand that profane part of mankind that cast off all care of God and Religion; but by the former, such as retained a sense of God and care of his Worship; and that these formed themselves into a Body, and became a distinct Society, for the better practice and prosecution of that great affair of Religion.

But the influence which this Provision hath upon the practice of Religion is so notoriously evident, that the Apostle, *Heb. 10. 23, &c.* discourses after this manner to those Jewish Christians that seemed to stagger in their Devotion; *Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering: Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is. For, saith he, if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, &c.* The plain sense of which remarkable passage is this, that keeping Church-Society is the way to keep upright in our Profession, and warm in our practice; and the forsaking of that, the ready way to Apostasie: and no other tolerable sense can be made of the Discourse of the Apostle but this. To which I think it not amiss to add a worthy Ob-

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servation

Thorndyke Service of God in Religious Assemblies. servation of that Learned man Mr. *H. Thorndyke*. He inquires, "What should

"be the reason, that the People of the
 "Jews before their Captivity were upon
 "all occasions prone to lapse into Idolatry,
 "when as after their Return from that
 "Captivity they never seemed inclinable
 "that way; and yet notwithstanding, be-
 "fore the Captivity they were never de-
 "stitute of the extraordinary Admoniti-
 "ons of Prophets, sent from God on pur-
 "pose to warn them of that sin and dan-
 "ger, and after the Captivity they were
 "deprived of this singular advantage:
 And at last gives this ingenious and pro-
 bable account; viz. "Before the Captivi-
 "ty, though they had the frequent Ad-
 "monitions of the Prophets, as aforesaid;
 "yet they had few or no Synagogues,
 "insomuch as we never hear of any Sy-
 "nagogue-worship during all that time:
 "but after the Captivity Synagogues were
 "very numerous, and by means of the
 "frequency of those Assemblies he thinks,
 "it might come to pass, that they were
 "kept from an evil they were so prone
 "to, that Prophecy it self could not cure
 "them of it.

3. Church-Order was appointed to fit
 and train men up for the Kingdom of Hea-
 ven;

ven ; to teach and inure men to live in Love and Peace and Order here in a Church Militant, that so they might be fit for eternal Society in the Church Triumphant.

It seems to be one reason, (amongst many others) why those that are designed for the Service of the Church are usually bred up in Colleges and Universities; namely, that a Collegiate life accustoming them to Order and Obedience, disposes them to be subject to the Government of the Church. And as a College is an Embleme of the Church, so is the Church below of that above; and the Education in the one makes men fit Candidates of the other. For it is not to be imagined that any mere Ornaments of Knowledge and Eloquence, or any other Gift or Grace, how eximious soever, can qualifie a man for the celestial Mansions, and make him fit to live in eternal Love and Peace and Concord with holy Spirits, that could not be brought to be peaceable, humble and obedient, and submit to the Culture and Discipline of the Church. There were therefore (upon the whole matter) great Considerations why our Saviour should build a Church. And so much for the First part of my Text.

PART II. I proceed now to the Second, the Foundation of this Fabrick, *Upon this Rock will I build my Church.*

I am sure it can be no new thing to Learned men, to note what triumphs they of the Church of *Rome* make upon this passage. *Tu es Petrus* is urged upon all occasions; as if not only *St. Peter*, but the whole Succession of Popes were hereby made infallible Oracles of Truth, and universal Pastors over the whole Church of *Christ*.

If we object that *Petrus* and *Petra* are two things, they will answer, that our Saviour spake in the *Syriack* tongue, and that there *Cepha* answers to both. But if we enquire why *Rock* must needs signifie *Head of the Church*, or why to be built upon as a *Rock* must signifie to govern; especially if we inquire why *S. Peter* might not have a Privilege conferred upon him, that such a man as *Hildebrand*, *Boniface*, *Innocent*, or some other either ignorant, lewd or enormous Bishops of *Rome* were not fit for: we should receive but slender satisfaction from them.

However I will not insist upon those Subtilties, but deliver my self plainly, for the unfolding this part of my Text, in these two Points.

I. It

1. It is notoriously evident to any man that consults the Scriptures impartially, that the whole number of Apostles have that said of them which is tantamount to this in the Text: I mean, the Church is said to be built upon them as well as upon *S. Peter*. For example, *Eph. 2. 20.* the Church is said to be *built upon the foundation of the Apostles, Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone*: that is, *Christ Jesus* first set on foot the Doctrine of the Gospel, and gave them, his Apostles, both commission and abilities to preach it, and gather Disciples, and form them into the Society of a Church; and they accordingly did so. Again, *Rev. 12. 1.* the Christian Church is described by a *Woman cloathed with the Sun, having the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a Crown of twelve Stars*, i. e. shining and glorying in the Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles. But more plainly *Rev. 21. 19.* *the New Jerusalem*, that is, the Christian Church, is said to have *twelve foundations*, answerable to the number of the Apostles.

To which purpose it is farther considerable, that the generality of the Fathers either make the *Petra*, or Foundation here in the Text, to be the Faith and Profession of *S. Peter*, which was the Belief of

* *S. Chryf-* all the rest, (though, according to the
in Matt. usual zeal and promptness of *S. Peter*, first
Hom. 55. uttered by him:) or else they conceive
Theophyl. this dignity to have been conferred upon
in loc. *S. Peter* in the name of all the rest. Ac-
Epiph. c. cording to the former of these goe *S.*
Carhar. * *Chrysestom*, *Theophylact*, *Epiphanius*, *S.*
Aug. trac. *Austin*, and several others: but † *Origen*,
10. in 1. *S. Cyprian*, *Tertullian*, and some others
Joannis. the latter way.
 † *Orig. tr.*
1. in Matt.
Cypr. Ep.

27.

Tert. de

Pudic.

c. 21.

2. But we will not stick to grant that
S. Peter had something peculiar conferred
 upon him here by our Saviour, namely
 this, that he should have the honour first
 to plant the Christian Faith, and so lay
 the first foundations of Christian Churches,
 both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*.
 Which is not onely the very account
S. Ambros. which *S. Ambrose* gives of the meaning of
Serm. 47. this Text, but that which appears even-
 tually true in the History of the *Acts*.
 For accordingly, Chap. 2. by a Sermon
 of his on the day of Pentecost he converted
 3000 Souls to the Faith of *Christ*, all
 which vers. 41. were *baptized* and formed
 into the order of a Church, and were the
 First-fruits of the *Jews*. Again, Chap.
 10. he is sent to *Cornelius*, and converts
 and baptizes him and his Family; and so
 laid

laid the foundation of the first Church of the Gentiles.

So that the meaning of this part of my Text is no more but this, that *S. Peter*, in reward of his forwardness in confessing *Christ Jesus*, should have the honour to to lay the first Foundation of his Church, as aforesaid. And of the truth of this interpretation I perswade my self any indifferent person will be abundantly satisfied, that will take the pains to consult the Learned *Camero* upon the place.

Camero.
Myro-
thec.

PART III. I now hasten to the Third and last Part of my Text, namely, the Prediction of our Saviour touching the event of this business, the Success and Duration of this Structure, *The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

And here we have great variety amongst Interpreters. Some, considering that Gates use to be the greatest Strengths and most fortified places, think that by *the Gates of Hell* is meant the Force and Power of the Devil and infernal Spirits; and that consequently the meaning of our Saviour is, that all the Persecutions which the Devil and his Agents raise against the Church shall never be able to destroy or extinguish it. Others, remembering that

of old time the Gates of Cities used to be the places of Counsel and Judicature, therefore think that by *Gates of Hell* is meant the Cunning, Craft and Policy of the Devil; and that the meaning of the Prediction is, that neither the Plots and Machinations of the Devil and his Instruments shall take place against the Church, nor particularly those Heresies and wicked Opinions which he suggests and foment against it shall ever be able to corrupt and deprave it.

I do not quarrel with either of these interpretations, but I observe they both proceed upon a mistake of the notion of *Adns*, which I will endeavour briefly to rectifie, and then all will be easie.

Now it hath been made plain by several Learned men, (particularly by the Learned Dr. *Windet* of late,) that *Adns*, which we render *Hell*, doth not signifie the place or the state of Hell-torments, or the punishment of the damned, either in the ancient *Greek* Authors, or with *Hellenistical* Writers, either the Septuagint, or the Writers of the New Testament. There is indeed one onely passage in the New Testament that looks towards such a sense, and that is *Luke* 16. 23. where, as we render it, the rich man is said to be in *Hell*:

Hell: but that is reconcilable enough with the rest, if it be duly considered.

But the general signification of *Adns* imports only the state of death, or of the dead, without relation to reward or punishment, misery or happiness; which these instances (amongst many that might with like ease be assigned) will make evident. *Acts* 2. 24. that passage of the Psalmist is applied to our Saviour, *It was not possible for him to be held by the bands of death*; and vers. 27. the phrase is varied, and there it is said, in the same sense, *Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell*, that is, thou wilt not leave me under the power of death, or in the condition of separate souls, but wilt raise me up again. And more plainly *Rev.* 20. 14. *Ἰθάτος* and *ἄδης* *Death and Hell are cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*; that is, Mortality is destroyed, the state of Corruption and Death are dissolved, or, as the Apostle elsewhere expresses it, *Mortality is swallowed up of Life*.

For the confirmation of both which interpretations, I will add the Observation of *Learned men upon that Article of our Creed, where *Christ* is said to have descended *as ἄδης* into *Hell*. They note, that in very few of the ancient Creeds
*See Bish.
Usher de
Symbol.
Bishop
Pearson
on the
Creed,
Artic. 5.
those

those words [*eis ᾧδν*] are to be found ; and especially that where-ever they are to be found, there those other words [*dead and buried*] are left out, save onely in the *Aquileian Creed*, where indeed both the phrases are used. Whereupon it follows, that in the sense of Antiquity Death and ᾧδνs, or to be in ᾧδνs, (which we render *Hell*,) and to be in the state of death, were tantamount expressions.

So then the meaning of our Saviour in my whole Text is this ; *I will, by the Ministry of my Apostles, and by thy especial agency, (Peter) gather Disciples to my Name and Doctrine, and I will have these formed into the orderly Society of a Church, united to me their Head, and to each other as in a common Body, having Laws, Officers and Government peculiar : And this my Church shall continue in the World as long as the World it self lasts, subject to no Fate, Mortality or Intercision ; nothing shall ever supplant or supersede it.*

And thus I have, according to my promise with all possible brevity explained the Doctrine of my Text. Let me now crave leave to press the Consequences of this Doctrine (upon your Practice) suitably to the present occasion, and I will conclude.

conclude. I will confine my self to these three Inferences.

First, Since our Saviour took care to found a Church, let us be of this Society, and value the Privilege of being of *Christ's* Church.

Secondly, Since there is such a mighty Usefulness of this Foundation and Society, let us especially that are Officers thereof endeavour to uphold it, and do it all the Honour and Service we can.

Lastly, Since our Saviour hath Prophesied, that all *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*, let us all, that love God's Church, bear up our selves against all Discouragements and Despondencies on the truth and infallibility of his Prediction.

I. APPLIC. Touching the first; To be of the Christian Church is to be of the most honourable Society in the whole world. It is to be of an Order whereof the Lord *Christ* is Founder and Protector, and whereof all the holy Angels are admirers: to be incorporate into the Fellowship of Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, and all holy men: to be of that mystical Body of which the Son of God is Head: to be Citizens of the *new Jerusalem*, Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God.

Observe

Observe what glorious things the Apostle speaks *Hebr. 12. 22, 23, 24.* *Ye are come to mount Sion, to the City of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born whose names are written in Heaven, to God the Judge of all, to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.* And all this means nothing else but, *You Jews* are translated from *Moses to Christ*, from your old Synagogue to the Christian Church.

God's Church is his Family, which he especially takes care of and provides for. He that is of it, is under the *Shechinah*, the wing of the Divine Majesty, and his special Providence.

His Church is his Vineyard, and he not only sets a hedge about it, but builds a watch-tower in it. No Nation under heaven had such signal instances of God's presence and blessing as the people of the *Jews*, whilst they continued to be his Church: but when they ceased to be a Church, they ceased to be a People, were the most abject and contemptible rabble upon earth.

Above all, to be of God's Church is to be under the means of Grace, the Dew of Heaven,

Heaven, the motions of the good Spirit, and the hopes of Glory. For to the Church hath he promised his presence and assistance ; there are dispensed the lively Oracles of God, there hath he provided a constant succession of Dispensers of the bread of life, to fit it to all needs and all Capacities.

Is it a small security to our minds, or satisfaction to our Consciences, that we are not left to the deceits and whispers of a private spirit, to personal conjectures or secret insinuations, but have the publick Doctrine of the Church ?

Is it not a great encouragement of our Prayers, when we are fortified against the just reflections upon our own meanness and demerits, by the concurrent Prayers of all God's people, and mingle our devotions with theirs, that so they may together come up a sweet odour before God ?

Is it a small advantage to joyn in that holy Leaguer, and besiege Heaven by conjoynd and ardent importunities ? *Coinus in cœtum*, (saith *Tertullian*) *ut ad Deum quasi manu factâ precationibus ambiamus orantes.*

Can it chuse but be a great animation and incouragement to us, to have before
our

our eyes all the great Examples in God's Church ?

Is it not a mighty matter, to have our Faith strengthened and enlivened, our Love inflamed, our Comforts raised by the holy Communion? Will not the flame of others kindle our Zeal and Affections? And shall it not put us into an ecstasie of Devotion, to see as it were *Christ* crucified before our eyes, opening his Arms to us, and pouring out his Blood for us?

Socrates is said to have given solemn thanks to God, (amongst other things) that by his Providence he was a Philosopher, and not a Barbarian: and shall the twilight or drawnings of natural light be more ravishing than the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness?

Shall *Tully* break out in a kind of ecstasie, *O philosophia, unus dies ex præceptis tuis actus peccanti immortalitati est anteponendus*? and shall not we much rather break out with the Psalmist, *A day in thy courts is better than a thousand*; and, *I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness*?

The Chief Captain, *Acts* 22. 28. gloried that he was a free Citizen of *Rome*, and thought it worth the purchase of a great summe of money; *But*, saith *St. Paul*,
I was

I was free born: and is it a small thing to us, that we are born and brought up in the Church of God?

The *Romans* generally had such an opinion of the Augustness of their City, that to be proscribed or banished was counted a capital punishment, and a civil death thought equal to a natural.

The *Pythagoreans*, when any one forsook their School, were wont to carry out a Coffin for him attended with a funeral pomp. And shall we esteem those alive that forsake the Church, the School of *Christ*?

The Primitive Christians had such an esteem of the dignity and Privilege of the Church, that *Cætu arceri*, to be Excommunicate, was so dreadfull a doom, as that those that pronounced the Sentence were wont to doe it with weeping and lamentation. *Te ought to have mourned*, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5. 2. and, 2 Cor. 12. 21. *I shall bewail many*. And to be cast out of the Church, and to be delivered up to Satan, were accounted equivalent. *Nam judicatur magno cum pondere, ut apud certos de Dei conspectu, summumque futuri Judicii præjudicium est, si quis ita deliquerit, ut à communione orationis & om-*

nis sacri commercii relegetur, saith *Tertulian* in his *Apology* for Christianity.

And who is there that hath been conversant in Church-Antiquity, that hath not observed what repentance and tears; what solicitations and intercessions, what humble prostration of themselves were used by those that were fallen under the Censures of the Church, to obtain restitution to Peace and Pardon? And who that remembers this would ever have thought there should have come a time, when it should be esteemed a matter of glory, and a point of Saintship, to cut off one's self voluntarily, and become a Separatist from the Church?

The Church of *Christ* is the same it was, and the blessings and advantages of it are still the same: Let us endeavour therefore to raise up its Glory, to recover the ancient Zeal, and to restore its Veneration. And let us all say with those in the Psalm, *Come let us go up to the House of the Lord: Our feet shall stand within thy Gates, O Jerusalem.*

II. APPLIC. And this leads me to my Second Application, and to address my self to the Clergy. You my Reverend Brethren, are not only Members,
but

but Officers of this Society: give me leave (being in this place) to recommend to you very earnestly the doing all the honour and service you can to the Church of *Christ*. Put the case we have but slender Encouragements, and live in an ungratesfull Age, that men will misinterpret our Zeal, blaze our Infirmities, resist our Endeavours, and oppose their own good: yet we are in an honourable Employment, we serve a good Master, and shall not lose our reward. Therefore let me take the confidence to press upon you the following particulars.

First, Let us be sure, for the sake of the Church, to pay such Reverence to our Superiours in it, as may render them Venerable in the eyes of all others. For assure our selves, that if we slight their Persons, and dispute their Injunctions, we teach other men to despise them and our selves too, and ruine the whole.

It is a memorable passage of our Saviour, *Matt. 3. 13, &c.* He comes to *John* the Baptist to be baptized of him: *John* forbids him, saying, *I have need to be baptized of thee, &c.* And it is certain our Saviour had no need of Baptism, having no stain of Sin upon him: notwithstanding saith our Saviour, *Suffer it to be so*

now, for it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness; that is, saith *Hugo Grotius*, it became the Son of God and Saviour of the World, to give publick honour and veneration to the Ministry of *John the Baptist*. And most certainly, what became our Saviour towards him, who (as he acknowledges) *was not worthy to unloose his shoe latchet*, must needs become us towards those that God and man have made our Superiours.

In the next place let us take care to submit our private Sentiments to the Judgment of the Church, and not oppose our private Opinions to the publick Doctrine. It was a memorable discourse of *S. Paul* to the *Corinthians*, Ep. i. Chap. ii. When he had been delivering his judgment about Long hair, and such other matters of decency, to the reasons he gives of his judgment in those affairs he subjoyns these words, vers. 16. *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God.* As if he had said, If the reasons I give prevail not with you, yet the Practice of the Church is with me, and the Custom of the Church ought to be sufficient to rule such a Case.

Thirdly, Let us remember it is Church-work we are employed about, and that
work

work is to be done in peace: we must therefore gain upon men by love and gentleness, oblige them by condescension and goodness, not exasperate and drive them from the Church by passion and frowardness. Especially we must be sure, that we represent not the terms of our Communion narrower than needs must, lest we depopulate by such Inclosures, and make the Church become a Conventicle: but consider well the importance of those words of our Saviour, *He that is not against us is with us.*

It is recorded by several Historians, that when the *Persians* had wasted *Greece*, and amongst other instances of Barbarity had also burnt down the Temples of their Gods; the *Greeks*, when they emerged from the Calamity, and recovered their own Territories, would never after rebuild the ruins of those Temples, but left them as they were, that they might be Monuments of the *Persians* Barbarism, and keep up in the *Greeks* an everlasting odium and detestation of them.

But *Pausanias*, on the other *Pausan. in*
side, observes it to have been *Bæot.*
the wisdom of the *Macedonians*, that in none of their Conquests they ever erected any Trophies, lest whilst they perpetuated

the Memory of their Victories, they perpetuated also the Quarrel, and provoked their Enemies to an immortal shame and hatred, and to watch an advantage by some fatal revenge to blot out their own infamy.

I need not in this Auditory make any Application of these two Stories: yet because I would be understood by all, I express my meaning thus. We of this Church have several sorts of Enemies. There are some we can never have peace with, nor security from; we must cheat our selves, if we think of any syncretism or coalescency with them: with such therefore the terms of distinction must be maintained, we must stand upon our guard, and quit our selves like men; there can be no accommodation, nor peace, nor truce, but what is fallacious. But there are others of whom there is hope that they may be gained: and all that I say is this, in such a case let us rather endeavour to make them good, than exasperate them by remembering that they have been evil, or reproaching them for what they have done amiss.

But above all let us not forget to honour and adorn the Church by true Piety and Vertue. A very bad Opinion recommends

mends it self with great advantage, if the promoters of it seem pious and devout: But Profaneness and Immorality, if it will not confute, yet will shame and baffle the best Profession in the world. Therefore, my Brethren, let not us only have our *Loins girt*, but our *Lamps burning*: That if any shall have the folly to reproach our way as a cold formal Devotion, we may effectually convince and shame them by the Holiness of our Lives, the Heavenliness of our Minds, by a great and quick sense of God, and a remarkable Devotion. That it may be said of us as of the Ministers of Religion in *Origen's* time, *Hi sunt qui vivunt ut loquuntur, & loquuntur ut vivunt.*

S. Hierom observes of the *Platonists* and *Stoicks*, that they were wont to hold their Conferences and disputes commonly in the Porches of the Temples: of which he imagines this to have been the reason, *Ut admoniti augustioris habitaculi sanctitate, nil aliud nisi de virtute cogitarent.* Let the Sanctity of God's House, wherein we daily minister, and the Majesty of the living God we serve, awaken and keep alive in us a constant Gravity, and quick sense of Piety. And then the most Sceptical men will be ashamed to blaspheme Religion, and call it a meer Juggle of the
D 3 Priests,

Priests, when they see us live under the Power of it. And then shall the Divine Glory descend upon us and our Church, as it was wont to do upon the Ark of God.

III. APPLIC. But to come to a Conclusion: Let us encourage our selves touching the estate and prosperity of the Church by the Prediction of our Saviour, that *all the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* Let us not be disquieted with rumours of the strength and numbers of its Enemies. Though *Ammon* and *Amalek*, the *Philistines* and Inhabitants of *Tyre*, I mean, though Atheist, Sceptick, Papist, Fanatick, all combine against it, the Prediction of our Saviour shall stand.

Josephus reports of the *Jewish* Priests, that when *Pompey's* Army rushed rudely into the Temple of *Jerusalem*, when the Priests were busie about the Sacrifice, and filled all with amazement and consternation, the Priests went on with their business, neither laid aside the Sacrifice, nor performed any part of it tumultuously or timorously. They, it seems, considered they were doing their duty, and employed in God's work, and therefore did not doubt but he would defend them and bear them

them out. So let us do our work undauntedly and courageously, that neither the Scoffs of Atheists abash us, nor the rude Follies of Ignorant persons move us, nor the Conspiracy of all together tempt us to such meanness of spirit, or weakness of Faith and Courage, as to grow despondent, and say with *David* at a low ebb of mind, *We shall one day fall by the hand of Saul*: but rather imitate that bravery of his with which he dismay'd and conquered *Goliath*; *The Lord delivered me from the mouth of the Lion, and from the paw of the Bear, and shall deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine*. To which purpose let us call to mind the miraculous Providence by which this Church was reared in *King Edward the Sixth* and *Queen Elizabeth's* days; and withall consider by what admirable Providences it was restored and revived in our days: and then surely we shall conclude it a fabrick of God's building, and which he will ever protect.

But if any shall be so diffident as to say, It may be true of the whole Church, that *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against* that, but this part of it, or this particular, Church may perish: for answer, I appeal to whosoever impartially reads the Scriptures, and hath perused Ecclesiastical History,

story, to say, if he can, whether any Church in the whole world is more truly Evangelical than this, or comes nearer, either for Doctrine or Government, to those founded by the Apostles themselves. And if this be so, why should we doubt of the continuance of the Divine Providence over it?

To which I add, for a Conclusion of all; Look over the History of all Times and Countreys, of all States and Kingdoms, and consider if ever any orderly and considerable Society in the world was dissolved otherwise, than by being broken and divided in it self. And Let the consideration hereof oblige us to the truest Love and firmest Union amongst our selves. Our Saviour hath told us, that *a Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand*; and the very Kingdom of Satan requires Order, and subsists by Unity. Let it not be true in every instance, especially in this fatal one, that *the children of this world* (much less the subjects of the Kingdom of Darkness) *are wiser than the children of light*. But let us (as I have said) sincerely practise our Religion, courageously own our Profession, and *maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace and Love amongst our*

our selves: And then *all the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against us.* Which God of his mercy grant through *Jesus Christ* our Lord: To whom, &c.

A SER-

A
SERMON

Preached before

The Right Honourable

THE
Lord MAYOR and ALDERMEN

Of the CITY of
LONDON.

ACTS xvii. Verse 31.

*Because he hath appointed a day,
in the which he will judge the
World in righteousness, by that
Man whom he hath ordained,
whereof he hath given assurance
unto all Men, in that he hath
raised him from the dead.*

THE words are part of a discourse
or Sermon of S. Paul before the
Court of the *Areopagites*, a Se-
nate or Consistory of Judges, famous in
those

those days for the severest Wisdom, Gravity, Integrity. The occasion was this, St. Paul coming to Athens, (a City equally remarkable for Learning and Liberty, Superstition and Curiosity) there publishes the Gospel, as he was wont to do in other places; the Emphasis of his Doctrine was *Jesus*, and the *Resurrection*; and ver. 17. upon these Points *he disputed in the Synagogue with the Jews, and other devout persons, and daily in the Market with such as met with him.*

Hereupon two Sects of Philosophers at once encounter him, viz. the *Epicureans* and the *Stoicks*. The former of these, instead of a God and a Wise Providence to make and govern the world, brought in Fortune or Blind Chance to bear all the sway. The latter (though they acknowledged a God, yet) introduced a rigid fatality as Superior to the Deity, and which with *Adamantine* bonds tied up the hands both of God and Man. The *Epicurean* devesting God of his Providence and consequently of all interest in the world; and the *Stoick* denying to Man all freedom and liberty of choice; seem therefore, if not equally malicious, yet equally mischievous to Religion.

How-

However these two Sects joyn to together to appeal St. *Paul* before the aforesaid Judges, not as a Criminal to answer for his fact, but as a Novellist in Philosophy to give a rational account of that new Hypothesis he had broached amongst them.

And here S. *Paul* acquits himself bravely: For first, he not only undauntedly asserts, but rationally deduces and demonstrates those two great points; *a God and a Providence*, to the exclusion both of *Fate* and *Fortune*. And then secondly, from the nature and very notion of God, he infers the folly and absurdity of all their Pagan Superstitions; and then in conclusion presses them to Repentance by the mighty argument in my Text, *Because God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world, &c.*

In which words I observe these Five particulars.

I. First, an Assertion of a Judgment to come: *He* (that is God) *will judge the world.*

For the more clear apprehension of the full importance of which, it is to be noted, that there are Two parts or Branches of Divine Providence, *The former*, that by which he takes notice of the Acti-
ons

ons and Carriage of men in this life ; *the latter*, that by which he brings men to account in the other world, and rewards and punishes them respectively to such their actions and carriage here. Which two branches of Providence do mutually infer and prove each other. For on the one hand if there were no such thing as a wise and curious eye of God, that strictly observes the actions, and distinguishes of the carriage of Men in this world, it were impossible there should be any Judgment to come , at least not a Judgment in Righteousness ; for how shall he judge that doth not discern : And on the other hand if there were no Judgment to come, it were to no purpose (but a meer troublesome curiosity as the *Epicureans* suppose) for God to concern himself about the affairs of Mankind here below.

But on the contrary if there be an account to be made hereafter, then most certainly there is a watchful discerning eye over Men here, and if there be such a discrimination of Men and actions in this world, then there is a Judgment to come. For it is by no means reasonable to think that an holy, wise and just Majesty should remark the vast difference there is to be found between Man and
Man

Man, and yet should content himself with that imperfect distribution of rewards and punishments, which virtue and vice respectively meet withal in this world.

Now this Doctrine, is the *Soul* and *Spirit* of all Religion, and the *Sinew* of all Government and Society.

It is the *Soul* of all Religion, for what doth the notion or the belief of a God signify, (although we should imagine him to be never so great, glorious and happy) if he will not trouble himself with Government, if he will not take notice how men behave themselves: in short, if he will neither reward nor punish; virtue is then but an empty name, a needless penance which men impose upon themselves, and vice and debauchery is as well safe and secure, as it is more easie and delightful. But if God distinguishes of Men and Actions here, and will indeed judge the world hereafter, this comes home to Mens interests, and awakens their Consciences; assuring them that piety and virtue are of vast importance and necessity.

And it is the *Sinew* of all Government; for it is certain that Plots may sometimes be laid so deep, that no eye of Man can discover them. And there may be such a Potent Confederacy of wicked Men, as
that

that they shall out-face humane justice, in which case, what shall keep the world from running into confusion, and becoming an hell upon earth ; but the discerning eye, and steady hand of Providence ? It is the dreadful Prospect of a Judgment to come, that curbs the Licitious : it is this Enacts the Laws of Society in the Consciences of Men. This guards the Thrones of Princes, and secures the Tribunal of the Magistrate.

But to proceed,

II. The second observable in my Text, is, that there is not only a Judgment to come ; but that the Day of it is determined. *He hath appointed a day wherein,* &c.

To adjourn to no certain time, is, I think, to dissolve the Court ; and to appoint no day is to disappoint the business: the Almighty therefore hath appointed an express and solemn time for this great Transaction. And indeed it is worthy of observation, that in all the great passages of Divine Providence, he hath passed such an immutable decree upon them, that the time of their event and completion

tion can be no more casual and contingent than the very things themselves. So *Exod. 12. 41.* the servitude of the Children of *Israel* was determined to 430 years, and the Text tells us, that *when the 430 years were expired, even the self-same day departed all the host of the Lord out of the land of Egypt.*

Again *2 Chron. 36. 21.* God had decreed to punish the Nation of the Jews with 70 years Captivity in *Babylon*, and precisely upon the expiration of that term, *when the Word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah was finished*, God put it into the heart of *Cyrus* to proclaim them liberty. Thus the time of our Saviours Incarnation was so exactly settled, that the Apostle not only adores the Divine Goodness in sending his Son, but the constancy and immutability of his Counsel, that *when the fulness of time was come*, he sent his Son into the world.

And as the precise time of his first coming was immoveably fixed, so is also that of his second coming to Judgment ; *Although that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the very Angels.* And it hath pleased the Divine Majesty to be thus punctual, especially in this great affair we are speaking of, (amongst other reasons best known

known to his infinite wisdom,) for this end, that he might more effectually awaken the secure world, who are apt to put far from them the evil day, and to convince them of the certainty of the Judgment, by the definition of the day on which it shall be held; but this brings me to

III. The third observable, namely, That as the day of Judgment is set, so the person of the Judge is also constituted and ordained; *He will judge the world by that Man whom he hath ordained, &c.*

And as all circumstances of time, place and persons are evidences of fact, and assurances of the principal business, so doth this particular designation of the Judge further confirm the certainty of the Judgment. And not only so, but it also opens to us the great depth of the Divine Goodness, especially upon these two considerations.

In the first place, it is wonderful decorous and becoming the Divine Majesty, and righteous towards the person of our Saviour, that he who humbled himself to take our nature upon him, and therein to fulfil exactly the divine Law, and after that to suffer death for our redemption,

E

should

should in reward of this obedience and humiliation be exalted to be the Judge of the world, which he *died* for : So the Apostle interprets to us this divine Oeconomy, *Phil. 2. 9.* Because being in the form of God, he made himself of no reputation, *but humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, &c.*

Again secondly, it wonderfully displays the divine Goodness towards us, that he should be appointed our Judge, that hath been, and yet is in our natures, that hath felt our infirmities, conflicted with the same temptations, and that withal had so much love to us as to die for us. That the divine Majesty will not oppress us with his own Glory, nor imploy an Arch-Angel to pass judgment upon us, who as he hath had no commerce with a body of flesh and blood, cannot have sufficient compassion of our infirmities, but one like our selves, that hath felt all that we feel ; and in a word, who hath loved us better than we can or do love our selves. What can any man wish in his own favour more than this ? If God should give us leave to chuse our own Judge, what choice could we make better for our selves, than

than that man whom God hath ordained? But how shall I be assured of this happiness, that I shall have so merciful a Judge? that we are resolved of

IV. In the fourth particular of my Text, *He hath given assurance unto all Men in that he raised him from the dead;* but how doth that assure us of this great and comfortable point? It is true the Resurrection of our Saviour did denote him to be some great and extraordinary person, but that is no sufficient argument that he shall be Judge of the world; the Evidence therefore lies in this, Our Saviour Christ *Jesus* whilst he was in the world had often declared, that he was appointed by God to judge the quick and dead, and appealed to his Resurrection as the great proof of this and all other things he said; now in this case when God shall accordingly so wonderfully raise him from the dead (as we know he did) what is it less than Gods setting his Seal to his Commission, or than openly proclaiming him to be the Judge of all the world? But

V. Fifthly and lastly, There is one particular more in my Text that deserves especial consideration, and that is the manner of this Judgment, or rather the mea-

fares this Judge will proceed by at that great Judgment, and that is *ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ*, *in righteousness*; he will judge the world in righteousness.

And this is the point I intend only to insist upon. All the former which I have mentioned are indeed great and weighty; but I cannot hope to treat of so many, in any sort proportionably to the things without trespassing upon this great Auditory. I will therefore for the present dismiss them, and apply my self wholly to this single point, from which I hope to offer something not unworthy your patience and attention.

Now in order hereto, we must first settle the Scripture notion of this phrase *righteousness* or *in righteousness*. And that which I first observe to this purpose is this; No where in all the Scripture doth righteousness signifie rigour or *summum Jus*: as when God is said to be a righteous God, it is not meant that *he is extreme to mark what is done amiss*; or when he is said to judge righteous Judgment, it is not to be thought that he will rigidly insist upon his own right, without consideration of any thing but himself, that he will make no allowance, but take all advantages that power or prerogative,

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or strictness of Law can give him. I say there is no such use of this word in Scripture when applied to Gods dealings, no nor yet when it is applied to Men; a severe harsh rigorous Man is so far from being a righteous Man in the stile of Scripture, that he is quite under another character.

There is indeed one passage in the Apostle to the *Romans*, Chap. 5. ver. 7. which may seem to favour another notion; the words are these, *For a righteous Man one will scarcely die, but for a good Man one would even dare to die*: but it is first to be considered, that the Apostle there alludes to a distinction well known amongst the *Jewish* Doctors, which was of some use to their purposes, but is not strictly true in it self; but especially it is to be considered, that there those two terms *righteousness* and *goodness* are put in opposition to shew their distinct notions *in abstracto*, and not *in concreto*, or as they are in the subject; for there or in practice they are always complicated and in conjunction, insomuch that he is no more a righteous Man that is not a good Man, than he can be esteemed a good man, that is not a just Man.

But as for God his stile (according to the wisdom of all mankind) is *optimus*

maximus, goodness and greatness mixed together, and as it were tempering each other ; the one not permitting him to be a severe captious Deity to be hated and abhorred, and the other not leaving him a soft and easie Majesty to be dallied and trifled withal, but both together raising a becoming reverence, which is the result of fear and love in conjunction.

But to come home to the business, the full of my observation touching the Scripture notion of the phrase in my Text is this, that *δικαιοσύνη* or righteousness is always used there in a comprehensive sense, so as to take in not only justice and uprightness, and impartiality, and the like, but also goodness, kindness, equity, clemency, candour and mercy : and so as the *Hebrew* words *צדקה*, *חסד*, *אמת* in the Old Testament are all used promiscuously one for another, so are the *Greek* words *δικαιοσύνη*, *ἐλεημοσύνη*, *χρηστότης*, *ἀγαθότης*, &c. used interchangeably for one another in the New Testament, as it were easie to make out by abundance of instances, if it were necessary. Take one passage for all out of the Hymn we sing daily out of the last Verse of the 98. *Psalms*, *In righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.* Where,

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as *World* and *People* are equivalent expressions, and interpret each other, so are *righteousness* and *equity* made to be expressive of each other ; so that as to judge the people is all one with to judge the world ; so to judge in righteousness is all one as to judge in equity, and to judge in equity is to judge in righteousness.

The result of this observation touching this phrase of Scripture is, That although in humane Tribunals we distinguish between Courts of Law and of Equity, yet these are not different Judicatories in the other world ; for there mercy and justice kiss each other ; Law and Equity proceed from the same mouth, the same throne ; and according to such a temper shall our Saviour judge the world in righteousness.

Now agreeably to this Notion, I will, by the guidance of the same holy Scripture endeavour to represent the measures of that great day ; and I think by the light we have given us thereinto, the proceedings of that mighty solemnity will be according to these five Rules.

I. First, Christ *Jesus* the Judge of all the world will not at the last day proceed arbitrarily with men, but according to known Laws : That is, he will neither

absolve and save any merely because he hath decreed so to do ; nor by a strain of prerogative damn any Man because he will, but will govern himself by the justice and equity of the Cause, and the respective qualifications of the Persons, as fit for eternal life or eternal death. This he himself hath declared before hand, *Rev. 2. 23. All the Churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and the heart, and will render to every Man according to his works :* and the Apostle assures us, *2 Cor. 5. 10. that we must all appear at the Judgment seat of Christ, to answer for the things done in the flesh, whether they be good or evil.*

Indeed in this world God doth deal by prerogative, and dispenses the means of grace as well as other favours, as he pleases, from whence it comes to pass, that more and greater advantages are conferred upon some certain persons or people than other, who notwithstanding were antecedently no better or more deserving than others, and this is properly free grace, which can neither be grace, nor much less free, if it be not arbitrary ; but this is not the case at the end of the world, when God comes to demonstrate his justice and righteousness ; at which time, though
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he expect not from men the perfection of Angels nor to reap but in proportion to what he hath sowed; yet (by the improvement of those Talents he hath afforded) he expects to find a difference in the attainment and temper of those he consigns to a different state for all eternity; and although as the Apostle tells us, *Rom. 2. 12. Those that have sinned without Law shall perish without the Law, and such as have sinned under the Law shall be judged by the Law*; yet still the proceedings are just and equal, because they are according to mens deeds, and proportionable to the opportunities of being good.

And if this were not so, that day could not be called a day of *Judgment* but of *Execution* rather; and the judgment *præ-judicium* rather than *judicium*, and the whole transaction a demonstration of will and power, but not of integrity and righteousness. And besides, wherefore is the Judge said to be the searcher of hearts, if he proceed proleptically upon bare resolution or determination? Why is he said to separate the Sheep from the Goats, if he make a distinction without a difference? Why is it called a fiery trial, if there be no discrimination; and in a word, if he save and damn by prerogative?

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2. The Judge of the world will not be partial, or use any respect of persons; that is, he will neither acquit nor condemn any man or men whatsoever, in consideration, of external circumstances, either because they are learned or unlearned, noble or ignoble, rich or poor; or for the sake of any kindred and family, no nor for being or not being of such or such a Sect, Party or Opinion. Thus the holy Scripture every where acquits God of, and particularly the Apostle *S Peter*, who had by reason of his *Jewish* Education been under other apprehensions formerly, proclaims with admiration, *Acts 10 34. I perceive of a truth that God is no respecter of persons: but, &c* As for those external accommodations of riches and honour, and whatever else there is of that kind; these however valuable they may be in this world, are of no moment with God, nor will procure a man any favour or privilege at the last day.

As for kindred and family, the *Jews* were wont to bear themselves in hand with their lineage and descent, that they were *Abrahams seed*: as if because God gave them the good Land of *Canaan* for the sake of that good man (without any desert of their own) therefore he had so intailed

intailed his favours upon them, that they could not miscarry in the other world neither; and most certainly if ever any plea of this kind could be admitted in that Court, it would be this descent from *Abraham the friend of God* and Father of the faithful: but *John the Baptist* plainly told them the vanity of this hope, *Mat. 3. 8.* requiring them to *bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and amendment of life, and not to say within themselves, We have Abraham for our Father; for saith he, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham;* as if he had said, God will sooner exert his omnipotency in the most improbable miracle that ever he wrought, than admit an unholy person into Heaven upon the pretence of kindred and consanguinity.

And as for Sect and Opinion, it is notoriously evident, that there is no opinion so Orthodox, nor party so Canonical, but an evil man may be of it, and at that day nothing will pass current for the sake of the publick impress or stamp upon it, but according to the intrinsic value; for all shall be weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary.

To this head I refer also, that this righteous Judge is capable of no fondness or indulgence,

indulgence, will be wrought upon by no flattery, nor moved by any complements, corrupted by no gift or service, will value nothing that men can either do or suffer for him, without an holy temper, an habitually pious and virtuous life, and such qualifications inherent as fit a man for the Kingdom of Heaven.

If sacrifices would have propitiated the divine Majesty, the *Jews* would have been sure to have done it, forasmuch as he himself complains, that he is weary of their *fat Lambs and Bullocks*.

If long and earnest prayers and importunities would prevail with this Judge, he would never have foretold us, that those which shall come and cry *Lord, Lord, open to us*, should be commanded to *depart accursed*.

If hearing Sermons would do the business, surely they that could say, *Lord, we have heard thee preach in our streets*, would be in a good condition.

Nay, if the most liberal alms or even martyrdom it self would carry a man through at this trial, *S. Paul* would never have supposed, *1 Cor. 13. 3. That a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet be a cast-away*. The plain truth is, that which God expects,

expects, and that which the great *Criss* of eternity depends upon, is (as I have said) a holy heart and life; but forasmuch as there is no one duty that is characteristic of such a frame, nothing of all these kinds, but what an Hypocrite or a wicked man may perform, therefore none of them will be sufficient security.

3. Thirdly, So just and righteous will be the proceedings at this great Tribunal, that as no man shall be saved for the righteousness of another, (without the personal and peculiar qualifications for a state of glory, wrought by the grace of God upon his own Soul,) so neither shall any man be damned for the sin of another, but every man shall bear his own burden

God indeed threatens in the second Commandment, *That he will punish the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him*; and from thence it seems the self applauding *Jews* took up an opprobrious proverb against the Almighty, *Ezek. 18.* saying, *The fathers have eaten sowre Grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge.* As if they of the present generation were a most innocent and unblamable people, yet became calamitous by mere misfortune, for being the posterity of wicked

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wicked progenitors, or at least that God by an act of prerogative translated the punishment from the offending parents to their innocent children; and agreeably hereunto they have a saying, yet extant in their writings, to this effect, *Non est vindicta super Israellem in qua non est pulvis vituli aurei*, that in all the Divine inflictions upon the whole race of the Jews there was still a spice of the Golden calf. But the true state of the case was this, God Almighty never threatned to punish the innocent for the nocent, but expresses himself plainly in the Text of the aforesaid Commandment, that he would punish only guilty children of guilty parents, and in that case when there had been a succession of wickedness from Father to Son, and by that means sin grew ripe for punishment, then he would inflict such severe vengeance upon such a profligate progeny, as (perhaps) he would not have done, had not there been such an uninterrupted course or kind of prescription for impiety. But still as he punished none but the guilty, so neither did he punish *them* beyond the desert of their own crimes; for so he vindicates his own proceedings in the aforesaid Text of *Ezekiel*, and assures them, that if any Son had never

ver so wicked Parents or Progenitors, yet if he seeing the evil of their ways should depart from it, and do that which was righteous and good, he should save his Soul alive, he should not die.

But whatever it may please the Divine Majesty to do in this world, where his inflictions are not so properly revenge or the expletion of justice, as methods of mercy to reclaim men from sin; or if we should grant (though upon the premises we need not) that the retributions of Divine Justice are less exact in this world, yet most certainly at that day when there shall be a full display of the Divine Justice, and a reparation of all the seeming irregularities of providence aforetime, then I say shall it be most conspicuously true, that the Sons shall not bear the iniquity of the Fathers, but every man *shall bear his own burden*, and the Soul only *that sinneth shall die*.

4. Fourthly, this Judge of all the world will at that great day candidly interpret mens actions, and make the very best of things that the case will bear; our Saviour hath told us, *his yoke is easie and his burden light*; and there is nothing more contributes to make them so, than this benignity of interpretation; for as no
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Laws are tolerable when they are rigorously strained and severely applied, so none are harsh and difficult that meet with a fair and equitable interpretation.

Now touching this the tenor of the whole Gospel assures us, that our merciful Judge will not watch advantages against men, will not insist upon punctilio's, but principally looks at the sincerity of mens intentions, agreeably to which we have ground given us comfortably to expect, that he will advance our good duties to as high a value as they are capable of, for so he expresses himself, *Mat. 25. 34.* when speaking to those on his right hand, he saith, *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit a kingdom prepared for you, &c. for I was hungry and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in, &c.* And then when, *Verse 37.* the righteous (wondering at this Divine Goodness, and modestly undervaluing their own performances) shall answer, *Lord when saw we thee an hungred and fed thee, thirsty and gave thee drink; when saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, &c.* *Verse 40.* the King graciously replies, *Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me;*

me; in which passage we see our Saviour and Judge not only takes notice of the meanest offices, and very cheap and easie expressions of charity, compassion and hospitality, but he remembers them for us when we have forgotten them, and that at the most advantageous season, when he comes in all his glory, and hath Crowns and Kingdoms to bestow, in the most important and critical time, when our eternity depends upon it.

But that which I principally note in this place, is the benignity of his interpretation; for when the righteous say, *Lord when saw we thee an hungred,* " &c. " as if they had said (with infinite joy " and admiration) When Lord had we " the happiness to give any such demon- " strations of love to thee, as thou graci- " ously imputeest to us? When had we the " opportunity to oblige so great a friend? He replies, *Inasmuch as ye have done* " *it to the least of these,* &c. as if he had " said, I know the sincerity of your in- " tentions, and I take notice of the virtu- " ous temper from whence those actions " of yours proceeded; 'tis the heart I va- " lue more than the thing done, or the " opportunity of doing; although there- " fore you never saw me in the flesh, ne-

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“when you did it unto these, ye would
“much more have done it to my self, if
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“self.

And then on the other side, (for the failings and infirmities of men,) this merciful Judge will make all the favourable allowances that can consist with justice; he considers the weakness of our judgments, the suddenness of our passions, the disadvantage of our constitution, the power of temptation, the subtilty of objections, the prevalence of customs, the contagion of example; for this is our happiness, he doth not only know our nature and circumstances, but hath felt all or most of these things himself. He therefore hath not like *Draco*, written all his Laws in blood, nor made all transgressions alike capital; he will not impute defects in our duties, as wilful contempts of his Majesty, nor interpret a surprizal to be our choice, or our infirmities and frailties to be presumptuous sins; but whatever there may be of this kind that can consist with a Divine life, with the sincere

sincere love of God, and a true and hearty sense of virtue and goodness, shall not be rigidly aggravated against us.

Nay more than so, when sin admits not of any of the aforesaid mitigations, but hath been committed with an high hand presumptuously, yet even then upon the interposition of true repentance, this Judge can mercifully pardon also; *he pardons iniquity, transgression and sin*; for he is not an ordinary Judge bound to the strictness of Law, but a sovereign Prince that can dispense pardons; all power is given him in Heaven and Earth, and he can as easily say to the penitent sinner, *Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee*; as to the Cripple, *Arise, take up thy bed and walk*.

5. Fifthly and lastly, The admirable equity of the great and final Judgment, is this, That the glory and happiness of good Men in the other world shall be encreased proportionably to the measures of their difficulties, sufferings and calamities here in this world. The Apostle tells us, *That as one Star differeth from another in glory, so also is the Resurrection of the dead*; and our Saviour, *That in his fathers house there are many mansions, not only room to receive many, but* (as that phrase

properly imports) several degrees and stations of glory; accordingly as the *dead in Christ* (or for Christ) shall first be raised, so shall they, having suffered for the testimony of *Jesus* here, shine with an extraordinary ray of glory there.

And in like manner, those that have been eminently good, under great disadvantages and discouragements in a dark age, amidst an evil and adulterous generation, and where *Satans throne* was, these shall hear that Eulogy, *Well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, be thou ruler over much.*

And according to the same equity, those who *ceteris paribus*, (or who having been but as good as others, yet) have been more afflicted with poverty, oppression, sickness or any other calamity in this world, than those others their equals in other respects, shall have amends made them in the other world; for by this means at last God clears up and vindicates the whole course of his providence, which though like some great Rivers, it seems to run under ground, or to be lost for a time, then breaks out again and displays the Divine uprightness: thus all is brought to rights again, and the present (at least seeming) unequal distribu-

distribution is repaired. The consideration of which one thing alone is sufficient, not only to make every good Man patient under his present burdens, and contented with his condition (whatever it be in this world,) but also to say, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

But this as well as the shortness of my time, puts me in mind to make some practical reflections on what hath been delivered, wherein for brevity-sake I will couch all I have to say under this one following address of application, and conclude.

Appl. Forasmuch then, as we have all this assurance of a Judgment coming, as that God hath not only foretold it, but appointed and publickly constituted the Judge, designed the very day, and acquainted us with the manner of the proceedings therein ; Let us seriously believe it, expect and prepare for it : far be it from every one of us to think or speak slightly of that great day, but let us live under a constant sense of it ; forethink the solemnity of it, feel the approaches, and hear the sound of that last trumpet : that this may incourage us in every generous undertaking, support us under all

our agonies, and check and baffle all temptations of what kind soever.

That neither profit may tempt us, nor pleasure allure us, nor power imbolden us, nor privacy incourage us to do that thing which we cannot answer at that Judgment-seat.

For consider, I am sure to be judged, and that at such a Tribunal where the Judge can neither be corrupted nor imposed upon; no Art, no Rhetorick will avail; I can neither evade the Trial, nor elude the Sentence; the only point then of debate with me is, how shall I stand there, how shall I be justified there, how shall I commend my case to the mercy of my Judge? This is the mightiest concern we can lie under, as that which though it be at distance from us, yet cannot chuse but have a present influence upon all affairs and moments of life, and consequently ought to be the summ of all our care and study. It is that which natural Light suggests to us, as well as Revelation, and which our very Consciences cannot but suspect (if they do not believe) in spight of Sophistry and all the arts of Infidelity.

When *S. Paul* preached to *Felix of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come*, he, though a sensual Pagan, trembles

bles at the Sermon, and had no other way to compose his countenance, but by pro-roguing the further handling of that subject ; now shall such a Man as he tremble and we be unconcerned ? shall Christians prove the greatest Infidels in the whole world ?

What shall we say then to them that desie and challenge God Almighty, crying, *God judge me, God damn me* ? Alas unhappy Men, he will judge you sure enough, and damn you soon enough, if a serious repentance prevent it not.

Nor let the consideration of what I have said before of the mildness and clemency of our Judge, render any man the more secure in this affair : It is very worthily accounted the great privilege of an *English* Subject, that he is never condemned without a Jury of his Neighbours and equals, such as may be supposed to know his life and circumstances, and to be touched with a feeling of his condition, as that which may be their own case at another time ; yet so much the more sad and the less pitiable is his case to whom this merciful constitution of our Laws affords no relief. And it is the unspeakable consolation of all sincerely good Men, against all their failings and infir-

mities, that we are tried before such a Judge, that having been in our nature, felt our infirmities, and undergone the same temptations, is able to pity and succour those that are tempted ; nevertheless by how much more mild the Judge is, and the more equitable his proceedings shall be, so much more shameful is the guilt, and more terrible will the condemnation be of those that here miscarry in their great cause.

S. Gregory Nazianzen observes of S. Basil, that such and so remarkable was his wonted mildness and benignity, that a smile from him was a grave censure, and his silence a reprehension of any indecency ; but now to see a two edged sword proceed out of the mouth of the Lamb, Christ Jesus, to see him that was all love and goodness, come in flaming fire to take vengeance, to hear him that was always used to open his mouth in blessings, say, Go ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

What a dreadful scene of things have we set before us, Rev. 6. 16. when the Kings of the Earth and the mighty Men, and the great Captains shall call to the rocks fall on us, and to the mountains, cover us from the face of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come.

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Let it therefore be the most intent thought, and the most sollicitous care of all of us both great and small, that we may be effectually provided for this day. To that end, *Let us judge our selves, that we may not be judged of the Lord, i. e.* Let us anticipate our own trial, and ascertain our own case before-hand; abandon all the ways of sin for the future, and for what is past let us make our peace with God by the most effectual repentance, and by applications to the mercy of God in the propitiatory sacrifice of our Lord *Jesus*. And herewithal let us imbrace cordially the whole Gospel in all the dimensions of it; nor catch hold of a promise without observing the conditions of it, nor make Christianity shrink into a notion, or dwindle into a ceremony or opinion, or be confined to the dictates and sentiments of a party; but live virtuously and excellently, be so much better Men as we have better principles and greater hopes, then shall we stand with boldness, and Christ *Jesus* will own us for his true disciples. Let us imbrace all the opportunities of doing good, inform, oblige, instruct the world, and make peace in it with all our power and skill: In particular let us imitate that righteousness, goodness, equity,
can-

candour and mercy, which we know we shall have need of, and hope to experiment in our Saviour at that day ; for thus we prescribe the measures of our own Judgment; for *as we judge so shall we be judged.*

In a word, let us remember that which sure we can never forget, how our Saviour describing the transactions of the last Judgment, lays great stress upon actions of charity and compassion, when he saith, *Come ye blessed, &c. for I was an hungred and ye fed me, thirsty and ye gave me drink, naked and ye cloathed me, sick and in prison, and ye came unto me.*

That this may be all our care at present, and all our case at last, God of his infinite mercy grant for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be everlasting glory , adoration and obedience world without end.

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A
S E R M O N

Preached before
The Right Honourable
THE
Lord MAYOR and ALDERMEN
Of the CITY of
L O N D O N.

M A T. xix. Verse 16.

And behold one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life ?

IT hath always been accounted, if not an Argument of Wisdom, yet a sign of an hopeful Temper and a Capacity for the attainment of it, to ask a discreet and pertinent Question: Especially if therewithal there be so much prudence

dence, as to make choice of and apply ones self to such a person as is likely to be able to resolve it.

Both these qualifications meet in the man in my Text. For in the first place he neither comes with some Rabbinical nicety, for the ostentation of his own learning and subtilty; nor with a captious interrogatory to intangle our Saviour in his Speech, but with a becoming gravity and sincerity to inquire about the great affair of another World. And for his satisfaction herejn he applies himself to him that came from Heaven on purpose to instruct men in the way thither.

But besides this, there are (in the Context) several very remarkable things in the Character of the person who makes this inquiry, and which consequently render the Question propounded by him the more considerable; as

In the first place *U. 20.* he is said to be a young man, and yet the warmth and vigour of youth, together with the common presumption of having long to live in this world, did not abate his concern for the life to come.

Again *U. 21.* he is said to be a rich man; yet neither the pleasures, nor the
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cares and business of this world, made him forgetful of another world.

And if we compare with the Text the parallel story in S. Luke 18. 18. this person is called *ἄρχων* a Ruler, or (as the vulgar Latine reads it *Princeps*) a Prince; yet for all this he sought the Kingdom of Heaven.

Lastly, if we look back again to V. 20. he is described to be a virtuous or moral man; for he had *kept the Commandments from his youth up*, notwithstanding he desired to be further instructed, that he might make sure of eternal life.

Now from the Question propounded by this person under these circumstances I make these four Observations.

First, That the other World (or a life after this present) is a matter of that great moment and importance, that no thinking man can chuse but have his mind run upon it, and be inquisitive about it.

Secondly, That he who seriously and ingenuously inquires into this affair, will easily be resolved in the affirmative, that there is such thing.

Thirdly, He that being satisfied that there is such a state, as a life hereafter,
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is destitute of common sense, if he do not passionately desire to have a share in it.

Lastly, He that desires an interest in the World to come, is very absurd and unreasonable to hope for it, without doing some good thing for the attainment of it.

If it had not been a Question naturally occurring to the minds of men, it is not probable this young man would have troubled his head about it.

If upon consideration of the Question, the affirmative had not been highly credible, he would not have supposed it, but disputed it with our Saviour.

If upon supposition of the truth or probability of such a state, the enjoyment of it had not been matter of vast consequence a rich man would not have troubled himself, nor our Saviour, about it.

And if doing good had not been evidently the way to attain it, our Saviour would never have given such Answer to his Question, as we find he did.

So that all the aforesaid Propositions have a just foundation in the Text ; and therefore I intend to discourse briefly of them all in order, beginning with the first.

Proposi-

Proposition I.

That the Question about another World, or a Life to come, is of that nature, that no thoughtful man can avoid it, or chuse but be sollicitous about it. For it is certain we cannot so much as flatter our selves into an hope, that we shall live always here; and therefore it is obvious and natural for the mind of man to look beyond this short Stage, and to consider what shall become of him hereafter.

And although this inquiry be about a thing future that consideration doth not at all abate the desire of man after satisfaction therein: forasmuch as this is one of the peculiar Characters of humane Nature, and our Privilege above Beasts, that whereas they are wholly taken up with what is present and before them, Mankind hath a further scope, reflects upon what is past, and projects what is to come, and accordingly exercises his passions, and lays his designs: inso-much that we account him no better than a fool, that values nothing but what is present.

Nor

Nor is this sollicitude about the future a meer curiosity or extravagancy of the mind (as Atheistical Men would suggest to us) but very rational, as well as natural: For it is obvious to every Man to discourse after this manner: How comes it to pass, that I have an understanding Mind, a Freedom of Choice, a Conscience reflecting upon my own Actions? nay, whence is it, or to what purpose, that I have some kind of Notion and Anticipation of another World, if there were no such thing? And although it should be granted, that these things amount not to a Demonstration, that therefore there is a Life hereafter; yet can it not be denied, but that they afford sufficient ground of Enquiry, whether there be not such a thing, which is enough to the present purpose.

Besides, the Consequence of this Business so unspeakably great, as not only to recommend it to our Prudence and Caution, but to urge it upon our Consideration: For the Question is no less than this, Whether I shall live for ever, or be for ever buried in Oblivion? Whether I shall shortly be, as if I had never been, and all my Thoughts perish with me? or, Whether I shall survive the Ruins
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of my Body, and in another State reap the Fruit of my present Labours ? Nay, that is not the bottom of the Case neither ; but Whether I shall be crowned with Glory, in reward of the Good I have done here ; or be plagued and tormented in another World, for my Miscarriages in this ?

These things concern a Man so deeply, that he must either have lost all the Principles of Reason, and all Sense of Humanity, or must do a mighty violence to himself, that can abstract himself from these Considerations.

And it is further very observable, That this Question is not only of great moment, with respect to the other World (when that time comes) but is also of mighty Influence upon the Management of the present Life. Forasmuch as the Hinge of all our Elections and Prosecutions turns upon this Point ; and that till this Question is first resolved, a Man knows not what course to take, or how to govern himself.

As for Example , Whether a Man should be a Coward, and a Parasite, and flatter and humour every Body for Self-preservation ? or, Whether he shall dare to do bravely for his Prince and Country,

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or any other excellent Purpose, out of a Sense of Honour and Gallantry ? For it is evident, that if we have no Concern after Death, Cowardice and Baseness is the greatest Wisdom ; and contrariwise, if there be a Life hereafter, a quite contrary course is more reasonable and eligible.

Again, Suppose a Man to be in Adversity, what counsels shall he take, and how shall he behave himself ? Whether shall he sullenly sit down in Desperation, and curse his Stars, or erect his Mind with Hope ? it is certain, the former of these cannot be blamable, and the latter is ridiculous, if there be nothing to come hereafter.

In a word, Whether a Man shall suppress his Lusts, or stifle his Conscience ? Whether he shall live like a Beast, in expectation to die so ; or live like a Man, in hopes to live eternally ? This, and a thousand other Questions can by no means admit of a Solution, unless that other great Case be first resolved, *viz.* Whether there be a World to come, or no ?

Therefore this discreet Person, (in the Text) in the Prime of his Youth, and Flower of his Strength and in the highest Tide of his Prosperity, had considered of it.

it. It was not a Sick-bed Meditation; for he was in Health: nor a melancholy Qualm of old Age; for he was Young: nor the Effect of his being discontented, and out of humour with the World; for he was Rich and Prosperous: But it was the Effect of manly Sense and Wisdom; and so it will become every other Man.

• But so much for the First Point, I proceed to the Second.

Propos. II.

Whosoever seriously and ingenuously considers the Question about a World to come, or eternal Life, will easily be resolved in the Affirmative, That there is such a State.

I do not say, That there is such Evidence of this great Point, as that there can be no evasion; or that Men cannot disbelieve it, if they will; for besides that *Contumaciæ Deus nullum dedit remedium*, God himself hath never provided means, nor intended the satisfaction of the Obstinate and Contumacious.

Besides that (I say) if any Argument could be brought so irresistibly convincing, as that there were no possibility of withstanding it, there could in such a

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Besides that (I say) if any Argument could be brought so irresistibly convincing, as that there were no possibility of withstanding it, there could in such a

case be no virtue nor excellency in believing : For what Commendation can it be to assent to that, from which it is impossible for me to dissent ?

But the meaning of the Proposition is agreeable to that saying of *Tertullian*, *Qui studuerit intelligere, cogere & credere*, He that candidly and honestly applies his mind to the business, shall find it not easie to resist the evidence for it.

Accordingly we find a great part of the Heathen World, by the meer power of Natural Reason, and upon Principles of Philosophy (without the Advantage of Divine Revelation) to have attained very good Convictions hereof ; particularly *Tully* in his Book, *De Senectute*, in the Person of *Cato*, and *Plato* in his Apology for *Socrates*, represent both those Persons, as under very feeling and passionate apprehensions of another Life : For they observed, that in all the changes of things, and in the various revolutions of Matter and Body, not the least Atome of Matter was lost in the Universe ; and hereupon they thought it very unreasonable to conceive, that Life and Mind should be extinguished : Especially seeing that Souls, and all intellectual Beings, are pure and uncompounded,

pounded, and admit not of contrary Principles (in their Constitution) to combat with, and destroy each other, as the case is in Bodies.

Besides, they considered (as I observed in part before) that Human Souls were not only endued with Reason and Choice, and Conscience; but had (consequently thereupon) very clear Notions of certain Moral Differences of things, not as pleasant and hurtful only, but as good and evil upon higher accounts. The result of which Contemplation could not chuse but put them under Expectations of some account of their Choice and Actions hereafter; especially since they could not but be aware of the obscurity of Divine Providence in this World; and that there was no exact distribution of Rewards and Punishments here, according to Men's Demerits.

But what shall we say then to those pretended Wits that say, Let me see a Spirit, and then I'll believe there is a God; let me have a sight of Heaven and Hell, or I'll not believe there is any World to come?

Surely these are a sort of subtle Philosophers, that require flat Contradictions for the satisfaction of their reason; viz.

to see a Spirit (which is supposed to be invisible) for the proof that there are invisible Beings, and to have the World to come present, for proof that there is such a thing future.

These Men believe not ; but it is not because they cannot, but because they will not : nor is their Incredulity to be imputed to their Sagacity (as they would have it thought) but either to their Immodesty, in requiring unreasonable Evidence, or their Imprudence in not knowing what is proper and sufficient.

But whatever the case be, as to natural Light, and whether that can give sufficient security of another World or no, it matters not much now that we have Divine Revelation ; for he that doth but look into the Gospel, will find *Life and Immortality* thereby *brought to Light*, and Eternal Life written (almost) upon every Page thereof.

And if there be any so great a Stranger to the Principles of Christianity, as to call in question the Divine Authority of the Holy Scripture ; yet let such a Person but give it the allowance due to every common History of matter of Fact, and he shall not go away unsatisfied in this great particular : For upon supposition

tion of the Truth, and reality of our Saviour's Resurrection and Ascension ; both which are confirmed by the Testimony of abundance of credible Witnesses, and had been the easiest matter in the World to be confuted, if they had not been notoriously true, there can remain no doubt either of the Life of a Soul, after the Death of the Body, or of another World.

For who that considers our Saviour crucified, dead, buried, and lying three days in the Grave, and then rising again eating and drinking, and conversing with his Disciples forty days together, can doubt whether a Soul can exist after the Body is dead ? And who that considers him visibly ascending up to Heaven, in the Presence of so many Witnesses, can doubt of another World, besides that we at present live, and breathe in ?

This is the fullest and most convincing Evidence of things of this Nature, that either God thought fit to give, or Man in modesty can require : And it is such evidence, as the weakest Persons may apprehend, and all the Wit and Sophistry in the World can never baffle or confute.

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3. *Third Observation*, That he who is perswaded, that there is such a thing as eternal Life really to be obtained, cannot chuse but passionately desire to have a share in it.

The reason is plain and obvious, because eternal life is so great a good, that a man must be supposed to hate himself, that can do otherwise than desire it.

Eternal life is to be perpetually invigorated with the Power of the Almighty, and thence to feel a perpetual Spring of life within himself; by means of which he is to all Ages fresh as the morning, and durable as the very Heavens. Such a person can be sensible of no declension, change or interruption; he is placed out of the Sphere of sickness, pain, death, or the least suspicion of any of them.

He feels a constant Harmony in all his Powers, enjoys an uninterrupted peace in his Conscience, and is always under the light of Gods countenance.

Such an estate as this is so unspeakable a good, as that it falls not under the election of our wills, there is no freedom of choice in this case, we must desire it
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whether we will or no, if we believe it; inſomuch that it cannot be ſo much as a ſign of Grace or Virtue to wiſh for it, becauſe it is natural and neceſſary. Can any man wiſh to be eternally extinct, or eſpecially to be everlaſtingly miſerable? No man can think of either of them without horror, nor conſequentially of eternal life, without a kind of ecſtaſie of deſire. S. *Joh.* 6. 66. when the multitude (which followed our Saviour only for the Loaves) began to forſake him, he turns to his Diſciples, and ſaith to them, *Will ye alſo go away? Lord* (ſaith S. *Peter*) *whither ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.* As if he had ſaid, "If it were poſſible for us to "be ſo deſtitute of all Grace and Gratitude, as not to adhere to thee for thy "own Goodneſs and Excellency; yet can "we be ſo void of all ſenſe and ſelf-love, as to forſake thee and eternal life "together?

We read of ſome poor Pagans that happened to hear certain Socratical Lectures touching the Souls Immortality, and they were ſo tranſported with the admirable News, that they were ready to make away themſelves, that they might preſently enter into poſſeſſion of
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that blessed estate of Immortality, which was represented to them. And they were so much in earnest about it, that the Magistrate thought it necessary, by a publick Edict, to prohibit such Lectures, lest the Country should be unpeopled by that means. By all which it appears, that eternal life is so infinitely desirable, that (as I have said) there is no deliberation in the case; and therefore upon supposition of the belief of it, the only thing in question is, what we must do for the attainment of it? Which brings me to my

4. *Fourth and last Observation: Viz.* That he who is convinced that there is such a state as eternal life, and desires a share in it, cannot reasonably hope it, but upon doing good for the attainment of it. *Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*

Now for the proof of this, the holy Scripture is so express and full, that I should exceed the limits of time allotted for this Discourse, should I but mention the passages; and the Texts are so much at hand to every Man, that it cannot be necessary I should particularize. I will therefore excuse my self that labour, and you the exercise of your patience therein,

in, and instead thereof put you in mind, That there needs no Scripture in the case, forasmuch as it is the natural sense of every mans mind, a Principle in our Consciences not infused into us by Education or Instruction, but so ingraven by the very hand of God upon our Faculties, that no Art or endeavour can efface it.

For what else is the reason, that men are brave and comfortable in their Spirits, when they have done well and worthily, that they are then erected with hope, and kindly warmed in their breasts with Peace and Joy, that they can look up towards God with delight, and towards death without consternation?

And on the other side, what is the cause that when men are conscious to themselves to have lived wickedly, and done base and unworthy actions, that their Spirits are down, their very countenance falls, and all things look black and melancholy round about them? What (I say) can be the ground of this remarkable diversity in mens secret sense, but the force and efficacy of that eternal Truth which God pronounced to *Cain*, but hath written upon every mans heart:
If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?

ted? but if thou dost evil, sin lyeth at the door. So that there can be no doubt of the Proposition in general, That he that will hope to live for ever, and receive good in another World, must do good in this. Yet in regard there may be mistakes in the application of it, and all mistakes in an affair of this nature, are of perillous consequence to the Souls of men; therefore I think it necessary to explain this general Aphorism by the three following Particulars.

First, And first for the clearing of this matter, it is to be understood, That whatever good things are expected to be done by us in order to eternal life; yet there is nothing of proper Merit to be attributed thereunto as, if we could deserve eternal life at the hands of God, or make a Purchase of Heaven by our Obedience, and challenge the Justice of God for the performance: Alas! *when we have done all we can,* we must acknowledge *we are but unprofitable servants;* for we have not so much as performed that Duty, which was owing from us upon the meer obligation of our Creation, and therefore can make no Claim to the admirable favour of eternal life: that must for ever be acknowledged the free gift of God

God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But this truth is so plain, and confessed amongst Protestants, that I think it sufficient thus briefly to have named it.

Therefore *Secondly*, When we suppose that something is to be done by us in order to the attainment of everlasting life, it is not to be understood exclusively of the Grace of God, and the assistance of his holy Spirit; as if we could do any thing worthy of God without his help. For besides that such a Doctrine is contrary to the Tenor of the whole Gospel, to the undertaking of our Saviour, to the Promise, and to the Office of the Holy Ghost, and is derogatory to the Providence of God, especially as he intitles himself to be the Author of all good: it would in the consequence of it bring in Merit at a back door, which we excluded before. Forasmuch as that although eternal life (as to the proposition and promise of it) be acknowledged the gift of God; yet if I by my own meer strength, without Divine Grace, can perform the Condition of it, the reward will be in some sort imputable to my performance; for the case will stand thus, That eternal life is possible and attainable in the general,
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will be owing to Gods free gift; but that such a man in particular attains it, will be wholly owing to himself.

I should not have thought it necessary to have taken notice of this neither in such an Assembly, but that I observe several of the Ancients, and particularly S. *Jerom* and St. *Austin* have thought this to be the error of the person who propounds the question in my Text, *i.e.* they look upon this young man as a Pelagian as it were by anticipation: And therefore they read the reply which our Saviour makes to him thus, *Quid interrogas me de bono, &c?* not (as we do) *why callest thou me good?* but *why askest thou me of good?* there is none good but God. As if the young man had addrest himself to our Saviour thus: Good Master, thou propoudest to us eternal life and unspeakable happiness as attainable in another World, I am right glad of the Tidings, and with all my heart embrace the proposition; and now do but tell me also what is to be done for the attainment of it, and I ask no more, let me alone for the performance. Now to remedy this capital mistake of his, they suppose our Saviours Answer to import as if he had said: *Alas! poor man, you take wrong measures*

asures of your own sufficiency, you think that no other Grace of God is necessary to you but the revelation of the Divine Will; whereas the very truth is, That although eternal life be infinitely desirable, and you do earnestly desire it; yet you are not aware of the treachery of your own heart, and the difficulties of arising to a temper fit for eternal life: You must therefore beg of God (the Giver of every good and perfect gift) that by his holy Spirit he will assist you in the performance of your Duty, as well as to inform you what is to be done by you.

But *Thirdly* and principally, that which I think especially usefull to be noted for the right understanding of this business is, That when the inquiry is made touching what is to be done in order to eternal life: the meaning is not, that any one or more single acts (how good and excellent soever) separate from an habitual holy life, can qualifie any Man for eternal life; but an uniform goodness, a Divine temper, an heavenly conversation. For it is very reasonable to think so well of the generality of Mankind (at least of such of them as to whom the Gospel is made known and eternal life propounded) that there is scarcely any one Duty so hard and difficult,

cult, but would be undertaken for once by any Man, if without more ado he might be saved by it. For neither is any one Duty whatsoever so hard to discharge as a constant course of obedience, though in lesser instances; nor is God so well pleased with a generous action as with an obedient heart: he himself having told us, that *to obey is better than Sacrifice.*

There was a mighty Zeal upon several of the Christians in the Primitive times to suffer Martyrdom for their Profession: insomuch that divers of them were ready to accuse themselves before they were delated, and to provoke their Persecutors to take away their Lives. This Fervor of their Affection to Religion, and the contempt of Life upon the account of it was highly commendable: but the causes of the Precipitancy were not always unblamable: For it seems that some of them chose to go in a fiery Chariot to Heaven, as the nearer way, and far more easie than the tedious course of active Obedience: and excellent Discourses were made by the holy Men of God in those times to dissuade them from this course. The principal of which were agreeable to that which

which I am now discoursing, *viz.* That (whatever they might think) it was certainly more difficult in it self to weather out the storm at Sea, than to make suddenly to Port; more useful to the Church to maintain the Combate, than to be presently crowned with Martyrdom; and consequently more acceptable to God, that they should persevere in an holy Life, than to die the most glorious Death.

And in this Sense I take that remarkable Passage of the Apostle. 1 Cor. 13. 3. *If I should give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned; yet without Charity I am nothing.* It is certain, that a Man cannot be supposed to be willing to give all his Goods to feed the Poor, without a great measure of Charity to Men, at least as we ordinarily understand that expression; and it is not likely, that a Man should give his Body to be burned without love to God. I think I may take it for granted also, that if any single Acts of Virtue would carry a Man to Heaven, they would be such as these mentioned by the Apostle, *i. e.* either Liberality to the Poor, or Martyrdom for Christ. Therefore by *Charity*, with-

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out

out which (he saith) all these are nothing: He seems to mean, not the *Act*; but the *Habit*, and an universal Love of God and Goodness.

It was a Question often, and upon several occasions propounded to our Saviour by the Jews, *Master, Which is the great Commandment of the Law?* They, it seems, had a corrupt Opinion amongst them, That God set such a value upon some of his Laws above the rest, that if any Man would come up to those, he might easily be dispensed with in neglect of the other: Whereupon there arose very hot Disputes among them, which might be the darling Precept; and here some were for Circumcision, as the ancientest Law, and of most general Obligation; some for the Sabbath, as seeming to be most strictly enjoyned; others for Sacrifice, as that whereby they thought they might expiate all other omissions: One or other of these they were all apt to think to be the Critical points of Salvation. And they being frugal Men of their Labour and Devotion, come to our Saviour (perhaps secretly with design to expose him to the Odium of one Party or other, but apparently) to learn the most compendious

pendious way, and the shortest cut to Heaven.

But our Saviour being aware as well of their malicious Designs, as of the falseness of their Hypothesis, refers always those that ask him the Question, for Answer, not to any single Precept or Branch of the Law; but to such a passage, as contained a Summary or Epitome of the whole; namely, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and soul, and strength.*

And in like manner he deals by this Person in the Text, telling him, *V. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments; q. d. It is not enough that thou observe any one Precept, but thou must make conscience of them all. And the young Man himself seems to be aware of, and to have escaped this common Errour: For he replies, All these have I kept from my youth up? What lack I yet? As if he had said, "I am very sensible, that without universal Obedience to the Laws of God, "I cannot approve my self to his Divine Majesty; and therefore I have "endeavoured through the whole course "of my Life, conscientiously to discharge my whole Duty so far as I un-*

H 2

"derstood

“derstood it. But because I would not
“fail of that great Good which you
“have publish’d to the World; there-
“fore my enquiry further is, If there
“be not a Crisis in the business, I
“mean, something that may be done
“more effectually to secure me of my
“desires?

To this our Saviour replies, *V. 21.*
why then, If thou wilt be perfect, sell
all that thou hast, and give to the poor,
and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven.
Not that our Saviour intended this for
a standing rule, or a necessary condition
of eternal Life; for we do not find
that any where through the whole Go-
spel, he hath so universally and indispen-
sably propounded it: But his meaning
is, That such noble and generous Acti-
ons as this, where-ever they are per-
formed in conjunction with an Holy
Life (as aforesaid) give mighty proofs
of Sincerity, are Arguments of an hear-
ty love to God, and consequently do af-
ford a man the more comfortable
hopes of, and pretensions to eternal
Life.

So the result of all is this, The *via*
regia, the plain and beaten way to
Heaven, is to be habitually good and
holy,

holy, and to make conscience all along of every Commandment of God; and this will not fail to bring us to our desired Journeys end: But withal, because the success is of infinite importance, especially because we cannot but be conscious to our selves, that we have in many things either through ignorance, surprisal, or infirmity, failed of our strict Duty; therefore the wisest way to secure so great a Stake, is not to content our selves with an ordinary diligence in performance of express Duties, much less with a passive unblamableness; but generously resolve to do all the great things we can, thereby to demonstrate both the greatness of our minds, and the great value and sense we have of so inestimable an happiness.

And so much for the fourth and last Proposition.

APPLICATION.

And now I have briefly opened the four Observations I gathered from the Text, *viz.*

In the *First* place I have shewed how naturally solicitous every Man's mind

is touching hereafter ; and that the Man that doth not, and would not willingly believe a life to come, yet cannot rid his thoughts of it.

Secondly, I have shewed, That it is not jealousie, or meer suspicion, that disquiets the minds of Men in this point ; but that there is real grounds for it, both from the surest Principles of Reason, and the plainest Divine Revelation.

Thirdly, We have seen that eternal Life is of such worth and excellency, that no Man can chuse but desire it, if he apprehend there is such a thing.

And *Lastly*, That no Man can reasonably pretend to it, but upon the doing good for the attainment of it.

What remains then, but that in consideration of the Premises, we both reflect upon our selves, and examine what good we have already done, and what lies in our power to do, that so we may enter into life.

We cannot but be sensible, that our present Life wears away apace, Death making his daily approaches towards us,
and

and the great concern of Eternity draws on : Therefore (as the Wise Man advises) whatsoever good thing *our hand finds to do, let us do it with all our might*; this is the time of Probation for another World, now we stand Candidates for Heaven and now or never we must secure to our selves eternal life.

When Almighty Goodness hath designed so great a Blessing for us, let us not abject our selves, nor forfeit our Reason, nor forego our Hopes, and *judge our selves unworthy of eternal Life.*

Let us stick at no cost, boggle at no difficulty or danger, spare no labour, study, self-denial ; but do or suffer any thing for the attainment of it.

When *Naaman the Assyrian* went to the Prophet to be cured of his Leprosie, the Prophet bid him *go wash seven times in Jordan, &c.* the great Man took pet at the usage ; he expected the Prophet would *have called on the Name of the Lord over him, and laid his hands upon him, and presently have healed him :* But a wise Servant of his retinue, took the freedom to admonish him, saying, *If the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst not thou have done it ? How much more when he saith only, Wash and be clean ?*

I have proved already, That eternal life is infinitely desirable, and I cannot in the least doubt, but that every Man that hears me, actually desires it. What is the matter then ? Do we expect with the *Syrian* to be cured in state, to be saved cheap and easily, to be brought to Heaven by Miracle, and whether we will or no ? Do we understand what eternal Life is ? And can any thing be too great to do for it ? Can we stand upon terms ?

What would not most Men give for a continuance of this present life, which yet is little else but care and fear, folly and jealousy, pain and sickness, and at last ends in Death ? Yet at what rate would Men be content to purchase (if it was but) *Hezekiah's* Lease of fifteen years addition to the usual term of living ? But to live for ever, for ever ! This is a Pearl of such price, *that a wise Merchant would give all that he hath to buy it.*

Shall a little ease, a little pleasure, a little money tempt me to be content to be eternally damned ? Shall Heaven and everlasting Blessedness seem dear to me at the price of these ?

If (saith our Saviour) thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: and if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; for it is better for thee to enter into life halt and maimed, than having two hands and two eyes to be cast into hell.

Is it not better to deny our selves a little ease here, that we may rest for ever with *Abraham* and the Patriarchs in the Kingdom of God? Is it not better to forego a little momentary pleasure at present, than to be eternally tormented? Were it not a wiser bargain to be somewhat poorer in this World, so we may inherit a Kingdom in the World to come? Doth not every discreet Man value a great deal in Reversion, rather than a little in possession? Eternity is not far off, there is but the Lease of one short life between us and Heaven; and if it was farther off than it is, who but Fools and Children would be so taken with trifles and baubles, as to slight so inestimable a good in competition?

Let us therefore as Men, and as wise Men lay up for the future, and purchase this great Reversion: As Men of great sense and of great minds, let us contrive with our selves to do some good

good things, and great too, great as our capacities, and great as our hopes.

Far be it from us that a few cheap Prayers, or some slight Alms, or a formal Profession of Christianity, yea, or being zealous for a Party and Opinion, should be all we bid for Eternity.

I shall not need to specify what great and good things we should do in this case, forasmuch as every Mans own Conscience and his peculiar Circumstances will best direct him herein; yet for a Conclusion let me intimate that

To some of us the Providence of God hath given leisure and time and retirement from business: from these he expects they should spend that time in Devotion.

There are others, which the same Divine Providence hath placed in a crowd of business, their Province is to be Examples of Prudence and Justice in the Management of it, and to emerge and get out of it as soon as lawfully they may, that they may the more fully live to God and to their own Souls.

Some it is the Will of God should be low and poor in this World, and these shall do great things by patience and contentment and resignation to the Will of God.

To

To others he hath given great Riches and plentiful Accommodations, their Duty is to *be rich in good works*, that is, that they do actions of Charity, Piety and Beneficence as great as their Fortunes; that their hearts be as large as their Estates, and their Abundance be demonstrated by their accomplishing such good Works as others cannot undertake, rather than by indulging themselves such satisfactions as others cannot pretend to.

Some there are, who by the advantage of an happy Temper, of a great Reputation, and of a peculiar Address, are capable of making peace and agreement amongst Neighbours, and their Talent shews them their Duty.

Besides these, there are some Men whom God hath endued with great Parts and Wit, from these he expects they should imploy their Wit for God and Religion, that they should assert the cause of Virtue and Piety against the rude assaults of Atheistical Men.

To say no more, some are placed in Magistracy and Authority, these are called *Gods*, because they represent his Divine Majesty in the World; these are therefore to supply his place, so as that
by

by their Justice and diligence, there may appear to be a Providence in the World: Their peculiar Province is to hold up Government and Order amongst Men, to vindicate the oppressed, to discountenance Profaneness and Debauchery, and to shed a lustre upon Piety and Virtue.

In a word, as we may all do some good, so let us not fail to do all the great and good things we can, that so we may lay hold of eternal life. Which God grant to us all through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord, &c.

A SER.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before

The Right Honourable

THE

Lord MAYOR and ALDERMEN

Of the CITY of

L O N D O N.

PSALM xcvi. Vers 1.

*The Lord reigneth, let the Earth
rejoice; let the multitude of
the Isles be glad thereof.*

Whether this Psalm was penned by *Moses* upon occasion of the Victory obtained over *Sihon* King of *Heshbon*, as the first Omen of *Israel's* success in the Conquest of the promised Land? (as the Jewish writers think) Or,
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Whether it was composed by *David* upon the recovery of his Throne and Kingdom, when the conspiracy of *Abſalom* was defeated? (as the Greek Interpreters seem to intimate:) Or laſtly, Whether the ſame *David* indited it, upon the huge enlargement of his Dominions, by the addition of all thoſe bordering Countries, his Conqueſt whereof we have recorded *1 Chron. 18.* (as ſeems moſt probable.)

It is however certain in the general, that the *Pſalm* is an Hymn of Praise to the Divine Majeſty, and a devout acknowledgment of his power and providence in the management of the affairs of the World. And like as at the inauguration of ſome virtuous and brave Prince, or eſpecially upon ſome glorious ſpecimen or inſtance of his Wiſdom and Proweſs in the conduct of Affairs, it is uſual for the people to make mighty ſhouts and acclamations: So here is *the ſhout of a King* in my Text, and all the World is ſummoned to celebrate the glories of this great Monarch *Jehovah.* *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice; let the multitude of the Iſles be glad thereof.*

By *the Earth*, I underſtand the Land of *Canaan* and bordering Countries, the Terri-

Territory of the Church. By *the multitude of the Isles*, I conceive is meant all the remoter parts of the World; for by that name the Jews in their language were wont to call all but the Continent on which they inhabited, as may appear *Gen. 10. 5.* where speaking of the posterity of *Japheth*, the Text saith, *by these were the Isles of the Gentiles divided.*

So the words afford us these two observations:

First, That the Divine Majesty is not a mere necessary Agent or passive Being, or unconcerned Spectator of the Affairs of the World, but manages and governs, as well as observes the course of things.

Secondly, That this Divine Providence and Government of the World, is matter of security and satisfaction, of triumph and rejoicing to all mankind. And that although the Church of God have a principal interest in it, and advantage by it; yet no part of the World is neglected by God, or destitute of a Providence.

And

And these two shall be the subject of my present discourse. I am well aware that neither of them contain any new Doctrine to entertain and gratifie curiosity; but I am withal very certain, that they represent to us matter of the greatest usefulness and importance that can be for any times, but most peculiarly seasonable at this time. The Doctrine of a Providence (and especially such an one as the Text speaks of) being the only consideration able to allay our Passions, to abate our Fears, to remove our Jealousies, to cure our Melancholies, and consequently to promote Peace and Settlement both in Church and State. Therefore I shall not doubt either of your patience or attention whilst I give account of these three things.

First, I will shew what is meant by this expression, *the Lord reigneth*.

Secondly, I will demonstrate the truth of the assertion, That God Almighty exerciseth a reigning Providence in the World.

Lastly,

Temporal Prince, and neither thought his Royalty impeached by the Divine Sovereignty, nor an invasion of the Divine Prerogative.

And as little can I suspect that any should be so unreasonable, as to think that the supposition of a Divine Providence should supersede and discharge the use and efficacy of second causes, for it is a reigning Providence we speak of; now to reign is to command in chief, not to transact all things immediately, to prescribe to and govern, rather than to dispatch business by himself.

That which therefore we are to understand by Gods being King, is no more but that *Omne regnum est sub graviore regno*; that the Lord God is Lord Paramount, who though he not only suffers but inables other causes to act under him, yet keeps the reins of Government in his own hand; and consequently can and doth whensoever he pleases, interpose, suspend or controul them, and over rule all things to his own will and pleasure.

That things are neither carried by the hurry of a blind fortune, or chance as the Epicureans dreamed;

Nor

Nor born away with the swinge of fatal necessity, as the Stoicks imagined:

Nor yet left either to the will of man, or the natural efficacy of second causes, but that God sometimes interposes, and always guides and governs them.

This is that which was darkly and figuratively, but elegantly express'd by the Prophet *Ezekiel* in his first Chapter, where the course of second causes is compared to the *Wheels of a Chariot*, which run on in a Road with a mighty carier; but then v. 18. there are said to *be eyes in those Wheels*, intimating that God takes notice how all things go; and not only so, but v. 20. there is said to be *a Spirit* that guides and governs all their Motions.

Thus the Lord is King and reigns in the World; and so much for that point; I pass to the second:

2. Which is to make plain and demonstrative proof of this assertion, that so we may discover a just foundation for that joy and triumph which the Text calls for upon that occasion; and

for this I offer these four following Arguments.

First, I argue from the very nature and notion of a God after this manner: Every man that frames in his mind any worthy notion of the Deity, conceives him to be a Wise, Powerful, Just and Good Being; and whosoever conceives of him any otherwise, or leaves out any of these Attributes, debases him below the common notion that men have of him, and renders him no fit object of love, or fear, or worship and adoration, (as I shall shew more anon.)

Now he that denies such a Providence as we have explained, denies to the Deity all those perfections at once; and in so doing forfeits and forgoes the most natural and general apprehension of a God; so that either there is in effect no God, or there is a Providence. For if he cannot take notice how things go in the World, we cannot esteem him Wise.

If he sees how things go, but cannot help, or hinder them, we cannot allow him to be powerful; and if he sees, and can help, but will not, men will

will have no apprehensions of him as either Just or Good.

But because we certainly conclude him to have all those perfections, when we acknowledge him to be a God, therefore he doth govern the World. And thus in short we have all the branches of Divine Providence, at once, demonstrated from his Nature and Being.

Secondly, My second Argument shall be from the Spirit of Prophecy, or from all those Predictions of things to come, which have been verified in real effects in any age of the World.

He that denies that any thing hath been foretold, and come to pass according to the Prediction, must deny the Faith and History of all the World; and he that grants such things, cannot avoid the acknowledgment of a Providence.

For it is evident, that he who certainly foretells what is to come, must see through all the series of causes that tend to the production of such an effect, and especially if he define the very precise time and other circumstances answering to the accomplishment of the Event, his knowledge must be very accurate

curate and intimate to the whole intrigue of causes. But above all, if he declare before-hand, not only what shall come to pass according to the course of natural and necessary causes, but even such things as are casual and contingent, and such as are subject to the liberty and indifferency of the will of man and free agents: Then (whether men be able or no to discover the secret manner and means of this fore knowledge it matters not) it must be acknowledged, that he not only is privy to the Cabal, and sees the consultations and workings of these causes; but that he also governs the result and issues of them, which is that we here mean by plained it.

a reigning Providence, as we before ex-

Now all this matter of fact is evidently true in innumerable instances; amongst all which, I will only take notice of the Prediction of the deliverance of the Jews, first from their Egyptian Bondage, and then from the Babylonish Captivity.

In the former of these, the Event was foretold above 400 Years before it came to pass, and the accomplishment
was

was exact to a very day, as you find it observed, *Exod. 12. 41, 42.* the words are these, *And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self same day it came to pass, that all the host of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt: it is a night to be much observed to the Lord; this is that night of the Lord, &c.*

In the other passage of Providence, *viz.* the Babylonish Captivity, it was foretold above Seventy Years before it came to pass, and in a time of the greatest unlikelihood of any such Calamity to befall them, namely, in the time of their greatest Prosperity; and the period of their Captivity was precisely determined to the just time of Seventy Years continuance, and then they were to be delivered and restored to their own Land again: and all these strange things were punctually and precisely fulfilled, as appears by comparing together *2 Chron. 36. 22.* and *Ezra 1. 1.*

In both which passages there are so many admirable circumstances, so great were the obstacles in the way of their accomplishment, and also so much of the will of man concerned in the whole case, that of necessity there must be a

governing Power as well as a foresight in the bringing it about; in which two things lies the notion of a Providence. This is the Argument of *Tertullian*, *Præscientiæ* (or *Providentiæ*) *Deus tot habet testes, quot fecit Prophetas*; i. e. Look how many Prophets or Prophecies ever were in the World, and so many infallible evidences of a Providence.

Thirdly, My third Argument is from Miracles, or the several instances of Divine Interposition, either in raising and improving, or in depressing, suspending and altering the natural and ordinary course of second causes: For most assuredly, if ever the course of things hath been interrupted and brought into order again, there is plain evidence of a superiour Power and Management; forasmuch as it is not imaginable, that natural causes should go out of course of themselves, without their own decay and failure, and impossible that being once out of order (upon such decays and declensions) that ever they should recover themselves into their former order again; therefore if ever such a case hath happened, it must be the overruling hand of Providence.

Now,

Now, that there have such extraordinary things happened in the World, as this Argument supposes, the most Epicurean and Atheistical Wits do not altogether deny, but endeavour to find out some wise salvo or other for them, upon natural Principles, in which enterprise they are as much forsaken of all true Reason and Philosophy, as they are destitute of Devotion ; for to resolve that into natural causes, which is either above them, or contrary to them, is the greatest instance of humor and folly that can be assigned.

They will observe, perhaps, that in the Plagues of *Egypt*, or in some of the miracles done in the Wilderness, there was some appearance of natural causes ; but besides that, those causes were apparently incompetent to the effects : there was also such a strange and sudden bringing of those causes together, as could not but bespeak an Almighty Power and Government.

But then let them try their skill to tell us, what natural causes made the Sun stand still in *Joshua's* time, or made that unnatural Eclipse at our Saviours Passion, when the two Luminaries were in Opposition. Or let them tell us,
how

how Men utterly unlearned (as the Apostles and other Primitive Disciples were) should be able to speak all kind of Languages on the sudden? how incurable Diseases should be healed? nay, Men be raised from the Dead by a word speaking: in all these, and a thousand instances more, there is undeniably the interposition of the Divine Majesty, and so God governs the World.

Fourthly, and lastly, I argue for a Providence from the Conspiracy and Cooperation of all things that happen in the World, to a certain and uniform end, which cannot be without the direction and management of Divine Power and Wisdom.

Things that are and happen in the World (as we see plainly) have different natures, and various tendencies, nay sometimes run flatly cross to each other; but now if all those lines meet in the same point and center, if all apparent contrariety conspire to the same end, then there must be *ὁὗς ἀπὸ μὴχρῶν*, a God in the World. For if things were either carried by blind and uncertain chance it would be very strange, if they should not often clash and interfere

tere ; or if they be acted by their respective necessary causes, yet those causes being often contrary to each other, no one end can be jointly pursued and carried on between them ; therefore when we see (all this contrariety notwithstanding) all things so attempered and adjusted, that they at last cooperate to one great purpose, viz. the glory of God, and the good of Men ; then it is apparent that they are subordinate to one great, and wise, and universal cause, which presides over the World.

There are an infinite number of noble instances of this kind in all History and Experience, such as the afflictions of *Joseph in Egypt*, which God turned into a Blessing to *Joseph*, to all his Fathers Family; to *Pharaoh*, and to all *Egypt*. Such was the drowning of *Jonas* in the bottom of the Sea, and his miraculous escape thence, which was made an effectual means to convince the Ninevites, that God sent him with that awakening Message. Thus the Persecutions of the Church, which in the first aspect, looked like the most effectual way to suppress Christian Religion, proved in the issue, the most successful method of propagating of it.

So

So the afflicted condition of good Men in this World (upon a superficial view) looks as if virtue was under some malignant Planet, or that if any God minded it at all, it was only to discountenance and dishearten it; yet it proves nothing else in the conclusion, but a design to exercise, to try and confirm it, especially God so ordering the matter, that ordinarily the lives of such Men are intermixed, and as it were checquered with Prosperity and Adversity; the latter paring off their luxury, and not suffering them to grow light and vain, and the former preserving them from melancholy and despondency; the one affording them balast, and the other sails, that by the help of both together, they may steer an even course through the World toward Heaven.

This is the Argument of the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 29. All things work together for good, to them that love God, &c.* and that shall be my last argument for this great Point. It were easie to add a great many more, but I think these fully sufficient.

3. I come now to the third and last thing I propounded, *viz.* to shew the eminent

eminent and signal advantages that mankind hath by being under such a Providence, that so they may be sensible what cause they have to rejoice that *the Lord reigneth* : And this I represent in the six following particulars.

First, The belief of such a Providence as we have proved, is the prime Pillar, and the very Basis and Foundation of all Religion ; not only of this or that Religion in particular, but of Religion it self, and in the general notion of it. Forasmuch as the belief of a God, is by no means sufficient to support that great Fabrick, without this also of a Providence. For let a Man not only acknowledge the Being and Existence of a Deity, but also let him look upon him as never so great and admirable in his nature ; yet if he conceive of him as inactive, such an one as either cannot or will not trouble himself to take notice of Mens carriage towards himself : in a word, if he neither reward nor punish, the great obligation to Religion is wanting ; for the mere reverence of his excellent nature will be utterly ineffectual, either to keep a Man steady and constant in the difficulties of a strict and devout

vout life, or especially to restrain him from such sins, as both his temper is greatly prone to, and to which he hath the strong allurements of Pleasure and Profit; seeing such a Man is sensible all along that he is (upon this supposition) as safe in despising and affronting, as in fearing and worshipping the Divine Majesty.

And therefore the Epicureans, for all their acknowledgment of a God, were reputed Atheistical by the wiser Sects of Philosophers, and that not unworthily; because (as I said before) they making him to enjoy his ease, and to be unconcerned in the affairs of the World, subverted Providence, and with it overthrew all the reason of Religion and Piety.

Nay further, suppose a Man should acknowledge not only a God but some kind of Providence also, yet unless it be such a Kingly Providence as we have before stated, it will signifie little or nothing to the purpose of Religion. For so we see the Stoicks acknowledged both: But forasmuch as they apprehended the Deity to be bound under the Iron Bonds of fatal and invincible necessity, so that though he was aware how it

it went with Men, and might perhaps pity them in their distresses, yet could not help them; they hereby cut the main Sinews of Vertue and Devotion.

But now upon supposition that God is not only a great and everlasting Being, but a powerful, wise and free Majesty, and that there is such a Kingly Providence as we assert; then it is apparent that Vertue and Vice have vast differences, and Piety and Religion are the greatest concerns of Mankind. And therefore it is very observable, that this is the great Argument of the whole Old Testament, the main Doctrine of those times, and of all those Sacred Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets to awaken the World into the belief of such a presence of God in, and superintendence over the World. But I proceed.

Secondly, Not only the Internal Reason and Obligation to Religion is founded upon Providence, but also the External Profession of Christian Religion in special, and the whole Society of a Church subsists by the support and protection of it.

Our Saviour hath told us he would
build his Church upon a Rock, and the
Gates

Gates of Hell should not prevail against it : But it is certain, that it is not the inherent strength of the Constitution of this Political Body his Church, which can maintain it in all times, and against all assaults, but the strong hand of Almighty Power that preserves it : otherwise it is not imaginable but it had been shattered to pieces long e're this day. For either the violence and cruelty of Persecution had dissipated it, or the contagion of evil Examples would have debauch'd it ; or prophane Wit and Drollery would have laughed it out of countenance, or its own follies and Divisions would have crumbled it to nothing.

But Providence hath taken care, that neither the strength of its Enemies, nor its own weakness, neither their wit nor its foolishness, neither their combined malice and union, nor its own animosities and distractions, have had their (otherwise probable and) natural effects upon it.

And that this admirable event is not to be attributed to Chance or any other causes, but is the mere effect of Divine Providence, will be evident by this further Observation, *viz.* That so long as any Church hath kept close to God, and appro
ved

ved it self to him and to the Laws of its Institution, so long it hath always been safe and flourishing, (at least if we except only the very infancy of the Christian Church and Religion, at which time it pleased the Divine Wisdom to work a greater Miracle of Providence than all the rest, in exposing his Church in so much weakness to such strength of opposition, and yet preserving it (as the Burning Bush) and thereby giving a more illustrious evidence to all the World of his Providence over it, than constant prosperity could have afforded.)

But contrariwise, whensoever this Church or any Branch or Member of it, hath by wantonness and self-confidence, by pride and schism, by hypocrisie or prophaneness, forfeited this Divine protection; if Divine patience and moderate chastisements have not in due time reclaimed it, it hath by a severe act of the same Providence been most remarkably delivered up to confusion and barbarism: God hath pulled down his Fence, and the wild Beast of the Field spoils it, and the Boar out of the Woods devours it.

But lest any man who hath observed the horrible degeneracy, the hypocrisie

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Gates of Hell should not prevail against it : But it is certain, that it is not the inherent strength of the Constitution of this Political Body his Church, which can maintain it in all times, and against all assaults, but the strong hand of Almighty Power that preserves it : otherwise it is not imaginable but it had been shattered to pieces long e're this day. For either the violence and cruelty of Persecution had dissipated it, or the contagion of evil Examples would have debauch'd it ; or prophane Wit and Drollery would have laughed it out of countenance, or its own follies and Divisions would have crumbled it to nothing.

But Providence hath taken care, that neither the strength of its Enemies, nor its own weakness, neither their wit nor its foolishness, neither their combined malice and union, nor its own animosities and distractions, have had their (otherwise probable and) natural effects upon it.

And that this admirable event is not to be attributed to Chance or any other causes, but is the mere effect of Divine Providence, will be evident by this further Observation, *viz.* That so long as any Church hath kept close to God, and approved

ved it self to him and to the Laws of its Institution, so long it hath always been safe and flourishing, (at least if we except only the very infancy of the Christian Church and Religion, at which time it pleased the Divine Wisdom to work a greater Miracle of Providence than all the rest, in exposing his Church in so much weakness to such strength of opposition, and yet preserving it (as the Burning Bush) and thereby giving a more illustrious evidence to all the World of his Providence over it, than constant prosperity could have afforded.)

But contrariwise, whensoever this Church or any Branch or Member of it, hath by wantonness and self-confidence, by pride and schism, by hypocrisie or prophaneness, forfeited this Divine protection; if Divine patience and moderate chastisements have not in due time reclaimed it, it hath by a severe act of the same Providence been most remarkably delivered up to confusion and barbarism: God hath pulled down his Fence, and the wild Beast of the Field spoils it, and the Boar out of the Woods devours it.

But lest any man who hath observed the horrible degeneracy, the hypocrisie

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and corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, and yet withal takes notice of the great pomp, splendor and prosperity which that Society enjoys, should make this an Objection against that which I am discourfing, I freely answer, That I think it hath pleased God to make that fingular instance on purpose, and by an act of the fame Providence by which he punifhes other degenerate Churches, he hath kept up that debauched Church (juft as he did thofe wicked and idolatrous Princes the Kings of *Babylon* and *Affyria*, &c.) to be a plague and a fcourge whereby to chaftife and reclaim other and better, but declining Churches.

In all other cafes my Obfervation is abundantly verified; not only in the Church of the Jews, but in all thofe once famous Chriftian Churches of *Afia* and *Africa*. Which whilft they were humble and holy, true to their Principles, and worthy of Divine protection, fo long they were happy and glorious: But when they had provoked God to defert them, from that time it was neither their wit nor wealth nor learning, neither their numbers nor their reputation, neither their former zeal
nor

nor their Apostolical foundation, could preserve them from ruine and barbarism. I proceed further.

Thirdly, Divine Providence is the security and protection not only of the Church but of the State also. Of Kings and Princes, of Magistrates and Governours, and of Government it self: for it is not the *Satellites* of Princes, their Lifeguards that secure them, their Sword and Scepter that defends them, not their purple and all the Ensigns of Majesty; but an all-seeing eye of Providence over them, and an invisible Guard of Providence that protects them.

It was well observed by Sir *Francis Bacon*, that in some respects the condition of Crowned Heads and Sovereign Princes was more unhappy and uncomfortable than of meaner persons, and in this respect amongst the rest, because they have a great deal to fear, and little or nothing more to hope for in this World. They cannot go much higher, and they may fall a great deal lower. Other men if they have something to fear, yet they have a mighty sphere of hope to cheer and encourage them. Princes have but little scope

for their desires or ambitions, but on the other side, by reason of their long Train, ill Fortune hath great Advantages against them. And indeed in these respects their condition were very melancholy, but that there is a Providence which watches over them, and prevents their fears, and their dangers.

They are God's Vicegerents, and He maintains and upholds them in their Offices under Himself; He strikes an awe and reverence of Magistrates into the hearts of Subjects, that an enraged multitude shall tremble at the sight of one man, and He in other respects like themselves, saving that he hath the Stamp and Character of Divine Authority upon him.

He that calms the raging of the Sea, and saith to *the proud waves, Hitherto shall ye go, and no further*; it is He also that stills the rage and madness of the people. Therefore *Psal. 99. 1. The Lord reigneth, be the people never so impatient; He sitteth between the Cherubims, be the Earth never so unquiet: i. e. The Divine Majesty hath that influence upon the spirits of men, that it is not all the brutal rage and passion, nor all the combined force of evil men, shall*
be

be able to dissolve Government, or interrupt that Order He hath constituted.

Let us take one great and famous instance of this, 2. Sam 17. The people of *Israel* made a General Defection from *David* their King, and, as one man, were all for setting *Absolom* upon his Throne: The number of the Conspirators was as the Sand upon the Seashore, that in the expression of *Hushai* they were able to fall upon *David* and his Handful of men with him, as the Dew falls upon the Ground; and if he should betake himself to any City or Stronghold, all *Israel* shall bring Ropes, and draw that City into the River; so that there shall not be one small Stone left. What becomes of *David* in this case? Who shall withstand this Torrent? Only Divine Providence, this divides the Waters, this dissolves that great black Cloud, and makes it fall in a gentle Dew (otherwise than *Hushai* intended) and the result is, That in a trice the same men strive who shall be the first and forwardest in setting *David* upon his Throne again.

Therefore whatever Prince or Magistrate shall slight a Providence, they slight the best Fort of their Empire and

Jurisdiction, they dismiss their Guards, and lay themselves open to all the follies and rage and insolencies of the people.

Fourthly, Divine Providence is also the peoples caution and security against the weaknesses, passions and extravagances of Princes and Magistrates, so that they shall not need to resort to Arms or any seditious and unlawful means in their own defence. We use to appeal to an higher Court when we are oppress'd in an inferior Judicatory, and this is our proper refuge, when our Rights and Properties are invaded, to look up to God the supreme Potentate of the World, that he will restrain the exorbitances of his Ministers.

God is King of Kings, not only because he is above all other Princes, but because he restrains and controlls them, he makes and rules them, he invests and devests them. *Cujus jussu homines nascuntur, ejus jussu Reges constituuntur, aptique illis qui ab ipsis in illis temporibus regnantur*, said the great Saint Irenæus, *He that made men makes Kings, and he fits and qualifies them for the times wherein,*

wherein, and the people over whom they reign.

For it is He that can (amongst other instances of his transcendent Sovereignty) turn their hearts also. So Solomon himself a great and a wise King hath told us, *Prov. 21. 1. The heart of the King is in the hand of the Lord, and he turneth it as the Rivers of Water*; that is, as an Husbandman or Gardiner, can by Drains and Trenches derive the Water from one place to another, to his use and purpose; so doth God Almighty dispose and incline the hearts of Princes, be they never so strong and deep.

Cyrus was a mighty Prince, and had a heart as averse to the People of the Jews, and to their Religion also as any of his Predecessors, that carried them into, or kept them in Captivity. What was the matter then? what reason of State was there that he should let them go, and lose so much People, and so much Tribute? nothing, but the Text tells us, *God stirred up the heart of Cyrus.*

Nebuchadnezzar was so stiff-necked and impious, as that he defied any such Providence over him as we are speaking of; but

God turned his heart first to that of a Beast, and put him out to Grass till he had learned, that *the most high ruleth in the Kingdoms of men.*

It is therefore no deceitful or illufory method of security, to appeal to, and trust in Providence, in the greatest cases possible. It is true the safety of Religion, Liberty and Property are mighty concerns; but certainly they are not too great a stake to trust in the hands of God, who we see, both can secure them, and is obliged by the honour and interest of his own supereminent Government to be tender of them, against all the Arbitrary Invasions of those under him.

But perhaps some man will suspect, that it will look like Cowardice, if not Treachery (in confidence of a Providence) to neglect other means of security; and that it will be like him in the Fable, that lay in the Ditch, and used no endeavour to get out, but only cried to God to help him: To which I answer, that if the Providence of God have afforded us other means that are lawful and warranted by the standing Law and Rule of his Word, we tempt God if we neglect them, when those

those great interests are indangered ; but unless the means we use be as certainly and manifestly lawful and warrantable, as the cause we pretend to, shall be just and honourable, we shall but provoke Providence instead of subserving it. We forego our greatest security by not being contented with it; for by superseding Providence we alienate it, and by shifting for our selves we fight against God.

Fifthly, Providence is our security against private Fears as well as publick, against solitude and dangers of all kinds, whether by ill accidents and encounters from Brute Beasts, or more Brutish Men.

Man is a very feeble creature, and impotent for his own defence in a thousand cases that happen every day ; it were therefore a most melancholy condition of life, if we were not under the shelter of a Providence, if we had no Patron, if there were not a Superiour Genius, an higher nature continually solicitous about us for our protection : And therefore the well known Gentleman of *Malmfbury* might well be timorous and afraid that every Man should have

have designs to kill him, or that every accident might take away his life, for the Man did not well believe in a God above, nor had any confidence in a Providence.

And indeed such a case is so sad and deplorable, that it seems to be a very silly thing to desire to live if it were true : A man had better die once than live in perpetual fears of dying ; and nothing but childish cowardice could tempt a Man to wish to live one day, if he were confident there was no such thing as a Providence.

But if I believe there is a God that over-looks me where-ever I am, that is tender of me, that can and will preserve me as long as he sees good, in spite of all evil designs or accidents : this corrects a Mans mind and fortifies his spirits ; this suffers him neither to fear nor to wish for death, but enables him both to live patiently , and to die bravely.

And consequently of this, the trust in a Providence is the great encouragement of all generous enterprises and performances ; and these, whether they be publick or private, if a Man design a secret good thing, what can be the inducement

ducement to it? were can be the wisdom of giving himself the trouble about it, when he can expect no reward in this World, because the performance is kept secret from the notice of men; and if there be no Providence, it is certain there can be no reward in another World, and so his labour is wholly lost.

But if it be a publick action he designs, he shall be sure to meet with those will envy and malign him, a second sort will suspect him, and a third will traduce and defame him; and amongst the rest there will not want those that will find it to be their interest to oppose and hinder him: so that in short, without a special hand of Providence, no Man shall have either the heart to undertake, or the power and success to effect any noble action; but grant this great point, and Men are born above envy, opposition, and even above themselves.

I cannot upon this occasion forbear to take notice of a noble and memorable passage of the Roman Orator, in one of his Orations to the Senate of Rome, his words begin thus, *Quàm volumus licet, patres conscripti, no amemus; tamen nec numero Hispanos, nec viribus Gallos,*
nec

nec calliditate Pœnos, nec doctrina Græcos,
&c. the sense of the whole is to this effect, as if he had said, Fathers of the Senate, let us entertain as good an opinion of our selves as we will or can; yet it must be acknowledged, that we neither equal the Spaniards in numbers, nor the Gauls in strength and stature, nor the Carthaginians in craft and subtilty, nor the Greeks in learning and knowledge; and yet it is as certain, we have overcome and triumphed over all these Nations: Now inquiring into the reason of this success, I can attribute it to no other cause, nor give any more probable account of it than this; namely, that we live under a better and a quicker sense of a God and a Providence than any of them do, and this, and this alone gives us all the advantage.

Sixthly, But Sixthly and lastly, and to speak summarily, Providence is of unspeakable advantage and influence upon the spirits of Men, both in prosperity and adversity. It may seem indeed, that whilst a Man is in prosperity, he is in no need of a Providence; and it is too commonly true, that Men do not use to think much of God whilst all
goes

goes well with them. Nevertheless this practice however general, is very foolish and unreasonable ; for besides the uncertainty of worldly Prosperity, and that nothing is more ordinary than for Mens fortunes to be soon at a stand, for all their broad sails and most earnest endeavours if once the wind of Providence desert them: Besides this (I say) it deserves the most serious consideration, that all worldly Prosperity is very little worth (even whilst it lasts) if there be no Providence. For what great joy or contentment can the greatest affluence afford a Man, if all come by mere chance, or the course of the Stars, or by fate or any such indiscriminating causes. But on the other side, if a man can look upon his comforts, as the gifts and favours of a wise and a good God, then and then only they are comfortable indeed.

And then for a state of adversity, that is sad indeed if there be no Providence; think what it is to be in a storm at Sea, where the Winds roar, the Sea rages, the Ship cracks, no Anchor-hold, no Shores to land upon, no comfort in Pilot or Governours of the Vessel, nothing but a prospect of death every way ; if a Man cannot look up to Heaven, and have

have hope in God, what a case is he in? Or suppose a Man be close Prisoner, and denied the comfort of his friends, together with other refreshments of life, or confined to a sick-bed, or be buried alive with obloquy and reproach : in a word, that a Man be friendless and helpless ; now if it can be said to such a Man, there is no help for him in God neither, here is the very quintessence of misery, a case sad beyond expression : But contrariwise, if a Man in all the dismal circumstances aforesaid, shall yet firmly believe a Providence that orders all things well and wisely, that can if he please bring a Man out of all those difficulties, that certainly will make all these work for his good, and at last judge righteous judgment, and make him amends in another World ; then is any condition in the mean time very tolerable whatsoever it be.

And thus I have, I hope, performed the three things I promised from my Text ; and what remains now, but that we make Application of all to our selves, and that in these two instances :

1. By settling this great Doctrine in our minds. And,

2. By

2. By improving it in our hearts to all the comfortable consequences aforesaid.

First, Let us settle this truth in our minds, that God Almighty exercises a Kingly Providence in and over all the World; and let it (if it be possible) be a principle with us firm as a first notion, and indisputable as the verdict of our Senses: my meaning is let nothing make us stagger or be able to shake our belief of that which is of so vast consequence to us. Forasmuch as without this Persuasion, not only our Religion is nonsense, but we are the most abject and pitiable Creatures in the World.

Brutes and other inferiour Creatures have indeed no apprehension of a Providence, and yet enjoy themselves in proportion to their natures; but then this is to be considered, they foresee nothing, they suspect nothing, and so do not torment themselves before the time. But Man suspects dangers where they may not come, and foresees them when they are coming, is a sagacious and jealous Creature, and so anticipates calamities, and accumulates them. Now
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if there be no Providence, his condition is worse than that of inferiour Beings, he is doubly miserable, and that without remedy.

Shall then a trifling Epicurean objection, nay, shall a Sceptical surmise, or a flash of Wit and Drollery, baffle us out of that wherein the honour of our natures consists, and upon which all our comfort depends?

Laugh at and scorn them that laugh at a Providence, poor pitiful wretches that worship blind fortune, or a manacled and fettered Deity, bound hand and foot by fatal necessity: Our God is a wise and good and free Agent, restrained, limited by nothing, but his own Wisdom. He sees all things without difficulty or deception, manages all things without fatigue or weariness, governs all things with just order, judges without partiality, pities in all adversity, can relieve in all necessity, and with unspeakable glory rewards those that faithfully serve him.

And pursuant of this belief let us in the Second place raise our affections to the highest pitch of triumph, let us make a shout as in the Text, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude*

lude of the Isles be glad thereof: Or as you have it in the 10. Verse of the Psalm immediately foregoing, Tell it out amongst the heathen that the Lord reigneth.

Let all foreign Nations, and all foreign Churches, all that have good will, and all that have ill will to our Religion, or to our Country, know that *the Lord is King*, and that we trust not to the number of our Forces, or the Wisdom of our Counsels, our Seas, or our Rocks, our Courage or Conduct, but to our King, to that Divine Providence which watches over us.

Let our Prince and our Magistrates take courage against the rage or the follies, the numbers or combinations of evil Men; in consideration that they are the instruments of Divine Providence, the Lieutenants of God's Government, and he that set them in office under himself, will stand by them, and bear them out in discharge of their trust and duty.

Let the People be quiet, not listen to noise and rumours, but be sure to banish all disloyal thoughts of resorting to irregular means for the asserting their pretensions. Is not God in the World? hath any one wrested the Scepter out of his hand? why then should we not trust in him?

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When *Philip Melancton*, otherwise a very wise and peaceable and mild-spirited person began to be out of humour with the then state of the World, *Luther* addresses to him in these words, *Exorandus est Philippus ut desinat esse rector Mundi; q. d.* Good Brother *Philip* let God alone to govern the World.

Let the Oppressed, the Widow, the Fatherless and Friendless take comfort, for he that sitteth in the Throne will judge righteous judgment, and first or last avenge the cause of his meanest Subject.

Nay, let the Man that is tempted and assaulted by the Devil, hold his ground, and fear nothing, for God is above the Devil.

To conclude, let us all lay aside our fears and our jealousies, our sighs and complaints, our melancholy and despondency, *Is there not a balm in Gilead, is there no Physician there, Jer. 8. 22.* Have we not a wise and a Powerful, a Glorious and a good Prince, why then should we murmur? why accuse his Reign? why reproach his Government?

Novum seditionis genus otium & silentium, said the Historian; a sullen uncomfortableness and dislike of our condition, our discon-

discontent with the state of affairs, is a kind of Sedition against Heaven, our murmuring is no better than a libelling of God's Government.

Wherefore (to say no more) let us stick close to this God, this mighty Potentate; let us hope, trust, and rejoice in him, and he shall bless our King, our Church, our Magistrates, and all our Concerns.

Now to this Universal Monarch of the World, this King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, be all Glory and Praise, Worship and Adoration World without End.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before
The Right Honourable
THE
Lord MAYOR and ALDERMEN
Of the CITY of
L O N D O N.

January the 25th. 1684.

Micah iv. v.

*For all people will walk every one
in the name of his God, and we
will walk in the name of the
Lord our God for ever and ever.*

THat this Chapter contains a Prophecy concerning the glorious times of the Gospel, is the general opinion of all Christian Interpreters both antient and modern (one only excepted that

that I know of.) Nor need we to relye upon the opinions of Men herein, for the matter it self plainly speaks it; forasmuch as not only those words in the first verse *the last days* do direct us to such an application of the Prophecy, but especially because here are several such things foretold in it as have never yet been accomplisht in the times of the Jewish Church, and therefore must belong to that of the Christians. And amongst the rest these three are very remarkable,

1. That there shall be such a general confluence to the true Religion, and Worship of God, that the Society of the Church shall be full and numerous, verse 1. and 2. *It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many Nations shall come and say, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for the Law shall go forth of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

2. That this great and conspicuous Society of the Church shall enjoy Peace and

Tranquility, and neither suffer foreign invasion, nor intestine distractions. Neither be harrassed by its enemies abroad, nor torn in pieces by animosities at home, verse 3. and 4. *And he shall judge among many people and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their Swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more: But they shall sit every Man under his Vine and under his Fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.*

3. That internal zeal and devotion shall accompany all this external Glory and Happiness. This is exprest in my Text by an holy emulation amongst the members of this great Society, and a noble contention, who shall be most pious and devout, and a general resolution taken up by all those of the true Church to outvie all the blind zeal of others under false Religions, v. 5. *For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of our God for ever and ever.*

That all these three things here Prophesied of would admirably become the Christian Church cannot be doubted. And that the happy concurrence of all these

these is requisite, to raise the state of Christianity to such a condition as may be answerable to what several other Prophecies hath given us ground to expect, (sometime or other) can as little be denied. *Forasmuch* as without the first of these, namely, if there be not such a *confluence to the Church as that the Society thereof be full and numerous*, it can scarcely be called Catholick, but that glorious name of a Church looks like some petty Sect, and dwindles into a Conventicle. Without the second of these, *viz. unless there be peace and tranquility as well as numbers* in the Church, there will want the beauty and harmony which that glorious name requires. And lastly without the third, *viz. unless true and fervent piety be in conjunction with both the former*, all that external splendor and felicity will be but meer pomp and pageantry, whilst the Life and Soul of Religion is wanting. But where and when all those three things meet together eventually as they do Prophetically in this context then must needs be glorious times, when the Church can scarcely be called Militant, since it will be so lively an Emblem of that which is triumphant in Heaven. God grant (if it be his Holy will) that

our eyes may be blessed with so glorious and beautiful a spectacle. But in the mean time let us apply our Meditations to the third and last of those particulars, which my Text confines me to. *All people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will, &c.*

From which words I make these three observations.

First, That all Nations and People generally have some God and Religion or other.

Secondly, That all those Nations and People that have any God or Religion, do generally also express some zeal and devotion, some deference and regard to the Deity which they acknowledge, i. e. *They walk in the name of their God.*

Thirdly, That it is very natural and reasonable that the greater the God is, which any people believe in, and the better the Religion is which they are perswaded of and have imbraced, with so much the more ardent zeal and devotion they should treat that God and pursue that Religion: this is the ground of the emulation intimated in my Text, and

and the motive of that Resolution which it is prophesied shall actuate and inflame the Professors of the true Religion and the Worshippers of the true God, *q. d.* *If all nations* (Whatsoever God and Religion they have) *will walk in the name of their Gods*, with much more reason *will we walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.*

The third and last of these is that which I principally intend to insist upon; but I will speak something briefly to the two former also, and therefore I begin with the

First Observ. viz. That generally all nations and people have some God and Religion or other. This is implied in my Text, though not express as the other two are, and the truth of it is attested by the observations of all Ages, Climates and Countries, forasmuch as there is hardly any (if any) at all to be found amongst them utterly destitute of all Notion of God and Religion.

And touching this point that I may not either trouble you with the Citations of Stories, or detain my self from that which I principally intend, let it suffice that the *Roman* Orator who had diligently inquired

inquired into this matter, and was a very competent Judge in the case, pronounces thus in his Books *de Legibus*. *Nulla gens est neq; tam immanfueta, neq; tam fera, quæ non etiamsi ignoret qualem deum habere deceat, tamen habendum sciat. q. d. There is no Nation in the World either so soft and silly, or so savagely barbarous as to be utterly without any sense or perswasion of the being of a God, insomuch that even those who are either so dull or so unhappy, as not to be able to frame any proper and decent notion of the Divine Nature, yet cannot be so stupid and senseless as to doubt of his Existence.*

I do not say that there never was any one Person in the World that denied, or disbelieved a God, for we read of two or three profest Atheists, and perhaps there may be some few others, either of such dull and cloudy heads, or of such profligate tempers, that they have either doubted of or defied the Deity. But that which my Text leads me to assert is this, that Atheism is contrary to the common sense of Mankind in general, and that at least it will be very hard if not impossible to find any Nation or People that have lived without a God. *For* indeed it seems to be inconceivable that
such

such should become a People, or form themselves into a National Society, in regard there can be no foundation of Order or Polity without a God. For how can that be a People or Nation, that hath no Laws, no Magistrates, no Principles of trust, no obligations of subjection and obedience? How shall Laws obtain any veneration, or Magistrates any Reverence where there is no Deity (nay no Conscience) to give a sanction to the one, nor Providence to countenance and protect the other? How can there be any Faith amongst Men, or any Principle of intercourse or commerce, how can there be any difference between right and wrong, any propriety, or any security of Men's Lives or Fortunes, where no God is acknowledged to oblige the Consciences of Men? For it is apparent that Pacts and Covenants, nay Oaths and all such other things as use to be the assurances of humanity, and the Bonds of Society, are but meer empty names and of no validity, without a God to call Men to account for the violation of them. Whereas therefore some late Travellers tell us that they have discovered some whole Countries that live without any notion of a Deity or Religion, we must
crave

crave leave either to call in question the sufficiency of their intelligence, or suspect the credit of their reports in those particulars. Or else we must conclude some of the race of Mankind to be so sadly forlorn and brutish, and abandoned not only of all principles of Virtue and Conscience, but of Reason and Civility too, as that we may justly doubt whether to call them Men or no.

But as for a sort of pretenders to wit, who account it a great argument of extraordinary sagacity, and the highest attainment of shrewdness, to be above the awe of any Divinity, and to be able to laugh at the notion of Religion; it were easie to shew that they are as void of all manly understanding as they are of Virtue, and that they are besotted by their own sensuality and rendered incapable of coherent discourse, and as such men are the pest and bane of humane Society, so they ought to be the scorn of mankind.

But so much for that, I come to my second observation.

Second Obsery. That all those Nations and People that have any belief of a God, have also some devotion, and pay some remarkable Reverence towards the Deity.

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This is expressly asserted in my Text, all Nations and People that have a God, however different their apprehensions of him may be amongst themselves, yet they all agree in this, they honour and worship him in some proportion to the notion they have of him, *i. e. they walk in the name of their God.*

And the reason of this is very evident, for the very Nature and Notion of God, is so vastly great and concerning, that it cannot ordinarily miss of affecting such men with the greatest seriousness and regard. For whosoever thinks of a God, thinks of him as a wonderfully great and Supream Majesty fit to be feared and adored, and he that frames a Notion of a being that he may dally and trifle with, or especially that he may abuse and affront at his pleasure, frames no Notion of God, or thinks not of God at all.

I confess notwithstanding that Man as he is a Free Agent, and whose will is at liberty to overbear his judgment, may (if he please) *with hold the Truth in unrighteousness*, as the Apostle speaks; he may I say stifle and debauch his Conscience, and resist, and contradict the greatest evidence of his own mind; and upon this
account

account I must acknowledge it not to be utterly impossible, that he who in some measure believes God, may yet not only be careless and indifferent towards him, (that is, be void of all Piety and Devotion) but may also be scurrilous and profane too. Nevertheless it is manifest that such a man in so doing, doth violence to himself as well as to Religion, insomuch that it would be not only more manly and rational, but more easie for him flatly to deny a God, and become downright Atheist, than to acknowledge him and to affront him at the same time; or in a word, to contradict his own principles by his practice. I remember a Grave and Learned Heathen (*Plutarch* by name) discourseth to this purpose; *I had rather (saith he) be buried in perpetual oblivion, and that men should say there was never any such man as Plutarch in the World, than that they should remember me under an ill Character, or treat me with scorn and despight.* So questionless it would be less provocation to the Divine Majesty that men should utterly deny his Existence, and banish all Notion of him, than acknowledge his being, and in the mean while abuse him to his face. And indeed though

though we observe commonly, that the very worst of men are somewhat shy of owning themselves to be profest Atheists, yet whensoever we see in them a contumelious carriage towards God and Religion, we have too great cause to suspect that flat Atheism lies at the bottom, when profaneness floats at top, and that nothing but base-spiritedness and cowardice tempts them, rather to balk and contradict their principles than to own them. For let a man have never so crude and imperfect apprehensions of a God, yet if he own him at all, he must acknowledge him to be (as the first so) the most perfect and excellent of Beings, and upon those very principles even *Epicurus* himself will tell him, that reverence, admiration and praise is due to him.

But if a man improve so far as that he arrive at the acknowledgement of the true God, and have any ripe Notions of him; he then apprehends a mighty Majesty, invested with Infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice and Goodness, he considers God then as one that upholds him every moment, that doth him good every day, and can destroy him when he pleases, a God that sees his actions,
observes

observes his carriage, a Being too great to be despised, and too terrible to be affronted, and if all this be not sufficient to oblige such a man diligently to serve God and become Religious, yet sure it will restrain him from outrage and blasphemy towards him. And indeed he that can think of such a God without a Religious reverence, or treat him basely, must have either something below an humane folly, or beyond an humane hardness, nay indeed he seems (in the latter respect) to be a pitch above the Devils themselves; for St. James hath told us *they believe and tremble*, Jam. 2. 19.

And so much also briefly for my second Observation: I come to my

Third and last Observ. That the greater the God, and the truer the Religion, the more ought to be the devotion. Or that it is Natural and Reasonable that the clearer and more perfect Notions any Men or People have of God, and by how much the more reasonable and excellent the Religion is which they have imbraced, by so much the more ardent and remarkable ought to be their zeal and devotion, If all nations that have a God walk in the name of their God, then it is fit that we walk in the name of the Lord

our God for ever and ever. I do not say that in the issue and event of things, it happens always thus, for it is the shame of mankind, and the unhappiness of the World that we oftentimes find by experience, that the best principles prove ineffectual, and the noblest Religion is too often dishonoured by the most scandalous practices. But that which I observe, and am now concerned to make good, is only, that it is most genuine, natural and reasonable, that the best Religion should be attended with the greatest devotion, and the most Holy Lives. And the reason of this Doctrine will easily be made out by this short frame of discourse. *It is the privilege of our Natures* that we are neither like Machines moved by external force and impulse, nor yet like the brute Creatures carried away by the meer impressions of sensible objects, but we are moved from within, are governed by principles of our own, we deliberate of our way, and chuse our own course, and are guided by the free light of reason, and the conviction of our Judgments.

And this is the great reason of all polite Education in Learning and Study, which is not designed meerly to imploy and take up so much of our time, or to

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fill our heads with abundance of impertinent Stories, or to furnish us with endless talk and discourse, but to better our understanding, to enlarge the prospect of our minds, to furnish us with noble objects of Contemplation, and in a word, to improve our judgments, and direct our choice and prosecutions. Accordingly whensoever we would raise any man to some noble and generous enterprize, we know no more potent screw or pully, nor make use of any more effectual method, than to convince his judgment of the excellency of the design, to fill him with glorious hopes, and so to impregnate his mind with great and worthy resolutions. For as we observe in Nature that Water will rise as high as its Fountain but no higher, so it is also in morality, a mans practice will easily answer to the elevation of his principles, but it is as unnatural to contradict them or fall below them. as it is impossible to go above or beyond them: consequently as on the one hand, it cannot be a regular nor manly devotion that goes beyond our knowledge, so on the other hand it is as well to be false and treacherous towards our selves, as to be disingenuous towards God, to fall below our knowledge of him
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in performances, and that is not only a very insignificant knowledge that draws not alter it a proportionable devotion, but those are very contemptible men, and scarcely to be called men, whose principles are not seen in their practices.

This is agreeable to the Doctrine of our Saviour, *Mat. 6. 22, 23. The light of the body is the eye, if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness; if therefore the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness:* as if he had said, "What the eye is to the body, that is "the reason of our mind to our elections "and prosecutions; and as the one governs our outward man, so doth the other the inward; and as he is a most "absurd man that having eyes in his "Head, will shut them and run headlong "upon any danger, so is he no less, that "having a mind rightly instructed, will "suffer himself perversly to be carried "blindfold by the torrent of his Passions. "When ever a mans mind is well principled, he is in a fair way to an happy "conclusion, for in that case it is the "same madness and folly for a man to "run Riot meerly upon the prerogative

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"of his will, as for a man in the day light,
 "and with his Eyes open to dash his
 "Head against a Post; but indeed *if the*
 "*light that is in a man be darkness, i. e. if*
 "his principles be false and corrupt, then
 "it is no wonder if all run to ruine: For
 "though it is in the power of a wilful man
 "to be worse than his principles, yet it
 "is not easie (if possible) for any man to
 "be better than those are. Again *Mat.*
 12. 33. The same our Saviour discourses
 to a like effect, *Either make the tree good*
and his fruit good, or else make the tree
corrupt and his fruit corrupt: for the tree
is known by his fruit, i. e. "As the Fruit
 "and Productions of Plants follow the na-
 "ture of the Sap in the Roots of those
 "Trees respectively, so naturally do the
 "actions of mens lives answer the prin-
 "ciples of their Minds: A naughty Heart
 "will be sure to produce a wicked Life, and
 "it is regular and reasonable that a good
 "Religion should bring forth good devo-
 "tion.

This is the meaning, and this is the
 evidence of my third and last Observati-
 on. But now to bring this home to all
 our Consciences, and that we may all
 be perswaded to come up to this resoluti-
 on, and put in practice the Holy emula-
 tion

tion in my Text, these two things remain to be done.

First, that I demonstrate the excellency of our principles, and how much the Religion which we profess is better than any other,

Secondly, That in consequence hereof, I shew wherein our Zeal, and Virtue, and Piety should equal and outgo those of all other Religions.

1. As for the former of these I take it for granted, that all that hear me are not only Christians, but Protestants, and of the Church of *England*: and if I should go about at large to shew how much (upon that account) we have the advantage not only of Pagans, and Turks, and Jews, but of all other Sects of Religion, perhaps I may do a thing grateful enough, but it would take up more time to do it as it deserves, than can now well be allowed, however I will crave leave to represent these Four things.

1. *The Antiquity of our Religion.*
2. *The Credibility and Easiness of its Belief.*
3. *The Gravity and Decency of its Rituals.*
4. *Its Efficaciousness to make men generously Good and Holy.*

First, Our Religion is the most Antient, and therefore the Best and Truest. It was

the counsel of Almighty God by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, chap. 6. ver. 16. *Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old pathes, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls,* where we see the *old way*, the *good way*, and that wherein men may *find rest to their Souls* is one and the same. Agreeably whereunto *Tully* reports to us in his second Book *de Legibus*, that when the People of *Athens* were under great distractions in this affair of Religion, they consulted the Oracle, "By what Rites or in what form of Religion they should best recommend themselves to the Divine favour, and the Oracle gave them this Answer, That they should Worship God in the most Ancient manner; but this not sufficiently resolving them, for seeing the Customs and Rites of their Country had been often changed, they were in dispute which were the most Ancient Forms, they therefore applied themselves to the Oracle a second time to determine them which was the most Ancient Religion. and received this Reply, That the Best Religion was the most Ancient.

And certainly Truth hath as much the Seniority of Error and Superstition, as
God

God is before the Devil, especially in Religion; which if it be true and acceptable with him, must proceed from him, and then the Ancienter it is, the nearer it is to the Fountain of Truth. Besides, it must needs be a great satisfaction to the mind of a solicitous man, when he shall be able to observe that the Religion he imbraces is not of yesterday or a mere Novelty, which perhaps after Times may discover Flaws in, though it passes Current for the present, but when he sees it is plainly such as hath endured the Test of many Ages. And upon this Account (by the way) I verily assure my self we have less reason to doubt of the Truth of Christianity now in the present Ages, than those had who lived in the very days of our Saviour and his Apostles, and who were Eye witnesses of the Miracles wrought for the Confirmation of it, in regard it was possible that then men might have stood off with some colour of reason upon pretence of the Novelty of the Religion, and of the proofs of it too. For Men might say, though we see nothing that can be objected against these things at present, yet *dies diem docet*, after times may discover the imposture; but now when that Doctrine and those proofs have stood the Shock of

so many Ages, and if 1700 years together cannot discover the least Flaw or Defect in the Evidences of its Divinity, we have as great assurance as can be desired.

But now that our Christian Religion in the general is indeed the most Ancient Religion in the World, (and lest if we derived it no higher than our Saviour, the Pagans, and especially the Jews, should Pretend to greater Antiquity on the behalf of their Religions) the Apostle *St. Paul* hath assured us that our Religion for Substance was long before the Law, for thus he argues, *Gal. 3. 16, 17.* *Now to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not unto seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the Covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disanul it, &c.* "In which words amongst other things "the Apostle plainly intimates, that the "main lines of our Religion were drawn "long before the Law of *Moses*, and indeed that Christianity was for substance "the same with the Patriarchal Religion, "and so unquestionably the most Ancient of all.

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Conformable hereunto were many excellent sayings and discourses of the Fathers, and ancient Christian Writers, particularly *Epiphanius in panario lib. 1. cap. 1. August. Ep. 49. Greg. Nazian. in Orat. de Maccabæis. Euseb. Demonstr. Evang. lib. 1. cap. 5. & Histor. Eccles. lib. 1. cap. 1. &c.* which whoso pleases may peruse at Leisure.

And for our protestant Religion in particular, that that for the substance of it (and bating only the name) is as ancient as Christianity it self, is apparent by this, *viz.* that it derives it self wholly from the Holy Scripture, and the four first General Councils, than which nothing can be Ancienter that concerns the institutions of our Saviour; whereas all other Sects, (for whatsoever they have contrary to us) take their Pedigree from the Doctrine and usage of some later and darker times.

There are indeed those that object to us, where was your Religion before *Luther*? who have been often and substantially answered: And we may much more justly Challenge the same Men to give us an account (if they can) where was the Title of *Universal Bishop* till the time of *Boniface* about 600 Years after our Saviour?
where

where was their Doctrine of Transubstantiation till the *Lateran* Council about 12 or 13 Hundred years after Christ? where was the Sacrament of the Lords Supper confined to one of the Elements, and the People restrained the use of the Cup till the Council of *Constance* between the years of our Lord 14 and 15 hundred? and in short, where was their Purgatory and most of the rest of that trash which we have purged out and they distinguish themselves from us by, till the Council of *Trent*? which is indeed the proper Source of their Religion. But as for our Doctrine we received it from the fountain of Truth, Divine Revelation, expounded (as I said) by the first Councils and most Ancient Fathers. The Rituals of our Church we received from the Custom and usage of the Eldest Times and Purest Churches: And for the form of Government in this Church, we received it from the institution of the Apostles in all those famous Churches that were planted by them. So that we have all the substantial Evidences of Antiquity on our side, and our Adversaries must take the Novelty to themselves. And though by our Reformation we swept away the Dust and Rubbidge which Time and the busie Wits
of

of Men had covered the face of things withal, yet can we no more be charged with innovation or bringing in a new Religion, than our Saviour could be said to destroy the Law or the Prophets when he vindicated them from the corrupt Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, or to have erected a new Temple when he cast the Buyers and Sellers out of it.

Secondly, *As our Religion is the most truly Ancient, so it is also the most Credible in it self and most easie of Belief; and therefore ought to have the more powerful influence upon our Consciences.* It is not a *Maxime* with us *Credendum est quia impossibile*, nor do we think that a Man must lay aside his understanding and cease to be a Man when he becomes a Christian or a Protestant. We have in this Church no contradictions to Reason, nor to our Senses imposed upon us, nor do we lie under any violent Temptation to be Atheists and believe nothing at all by being required to believe impossibilities. For in the first place we have no Monster of Transubstantiation amongst us, which if a Man believes, he believes that which he can confute with his Fingers ends, and by the Testimony of almost all his Senses, and he that can believe

lieve upon these Terms may believe what he will, since nothing more difficult can offer it self to his Assent. Nor have we any Doctrine of fatal Necessity, which would be a flat contradiction to all the means of Grace, a fatal check to all virtuous endeavours, and consequently destructive to all the ends of Religion. But all the points of our Belief are either such as agree to the reason of our Minds when that is exerted and improved, or when any thing is required to be believed which is above our reason (it is yet both not contrary to Reason and alio) we are so plainly assured of it by the authority of Divine and Infallible Wisdom and Truth, that we have all the Reason in the World to believe it. Forasmuch as our Reason acknowledges that our Minds are not a Standard for Divine Reason, but that may be true which we cannot give a Reason of. Therefore we have mighty obligations upon us to be zealous and hearty in our Religion, and it would be an intolerable shame for us not to *abound in the work of the Lord*, seeing our Minds are so clearly satisfied of the truth of our Principles.

Thirdly, *All the rituals of our Religion are Grave, Decent and Easie. Such as*

we have no reason either to be ashamed to own, or to complain of the burden and difficulty in complying with them. The Rites of Paganism were many of them so lewd and obscene, that a modest Man should be ashamed to behold them, and some of them so cruel and bloody that a Man must put off not only good Nature, but even almost Humanity it self to be able to take delight in them. The Rites of *Judaism* were some of them scarce seemly, as that of Circumcision, others of them very nice and unaccountable ; and all together so very numerous and difficult to be observed that the Apostle, saw cause to pronounce of that Law, *That it was a yoke which neither they, nor their fathers were able to bear, Act. 15. 10.*

And as for the Rites of Christian Churches some of them are so redundant in empty Ceremonies that they are in danger to jumble out the substance and grow so troublesome thereby, as that *St. Austin* in his Epistle to *Januarius* complains the burden of them was no less intolerable than that of *Judaism* ; Others on the contrary are so negligent and defective herein, that the drels of Religion is slovenly and indecent. The former represent Religion with so much Paint and Pageantry

geantry, as if it was only to appear upon the Stage, and had nothing to do in the Hearts and Lives of Men. The latter are so careless herein, as that they are guilty of rudeness towards God Almighty. But the *Church of England* avoids both extreams, for that the Ceremonies thereby imposed are very few, nothing but extream ignorance can deny, and that they are grave and decent, every Man that is not wonderfully transported with prejudice must confess.

Fourthly and Lastly, *This Religion and this Church of England in particular hath all the advantages of making Men good and holy, and hath all the most efficacious methods of raising and improving the state of the World in general and of every member of it in particular.* This is so considerable a subject that it is pity to pass it by unconsidered, and yet withal it is so copious, that if a Man enter upon it he knows not where to conclude: But in short the Doctrine of this Church is a *Doctrine* that teaches Men to be Devout towards God, Sober and Temperate in the Conduct of themselves, and Just and Charitable in their Carriage towards other Men. A *Doctrine* that tends to make Men Holy in their Lives, Comfortable

table in their Consciences, and Peaceable in the World. Here is no quirks or distinctions to reconcile a vicious Life with hopes of Heaven, no palliative cures for Lewdness and Debauchery, no outlets for Knavery, no tricks of playing fast and loose with God and Men, insomuch that if a Man was resolved to be an Hypocrite, he had better be of any Religion than this of the Church of *England*. Again, Here are no Principles of Sedition, no seeds of Rebellion, no squabbling between the *Jura Sacerdotis* and *Imperii*, between Civil and Ecclesiastical Government; no such Doctrine as that Dominion is founded in Grace, or that Princes forfeit their Dignities and Estates upon pretence of Heresie; no exemption of any Persons from the Municipal Laws upon the account of peculiar privileges; no excommunication of Princes, but a Doctrine that makes the best Subjects in the whole World. And Lastly, Here is no Doctrine of Scrupulosity to fill Men with Doubts and Fears, and perpetual Complaints; no suspending our Hopes upon secret Decrees of God, or rendering him a captious Deity, but plain Holiness and Happiness are joined together. In short the Doctrine of this Church so far
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as it is heartily complied with, is able to make an Heaven upon Earth for Piety, Peace, Charity and Tranquility, and to bring Men assuredly to Heaven after this life.

As for the Prayers of this Church they are Grave and Devout, Plain and Effectual. They are neither so high strained and Seraphical as to Amuze and Confound those that should join in them, nor so flat and low as to chill their Devotion. They are neither uttered in an unknown Tongue, nor in phantastical Language; neither so long and tedious as if Men expostulated with the Almighty, or would weary him with their Importunities; nor yet so short and brief as if they dictated to him what they would have him do; but they are such as very good Men of Old thought no meanlier of than that they were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and to be sure such as are fit for humble Men to present to a Great and Holy God. And as for the Sacraments, they are in this Church neither more nor fewer than our Saviour himself instituted, and those frequently and solemnly administred. But as for the Preaching of this Church, it is fit in Modesty to leave it to the Judgment of Foreigners, who pronounce it to be the best in the World.

Now

Now therefore, upon the whole Matter, I think we may (as we are wont to do) justly glory of our Faith, our Principles, our Church and our Religion; and why then should not we be the best Men in the World too? Why should not we not only out-go *Pagans, Turks and Jews*, but all the several Sects of Christians also? We please our selves in pitying poor Infidels, and other Ignorant or Deceived Wretches which have not the Advantages which we enjoy: But what will all our Prerogatives avail us, if we be not so much better than any of the fore-mention'd Persons, as God hath dealt better with us? But this brings me to the Second thing I propounded, and with which I will conclude; namely, by way of Inference from the Premises, to shew what manner of Persons we ought to be, and how to out-vie the rest of the World.

And here I will confine my self to Two Branches.

1. *It is plainly Consequential, of what hath been discoursed under this Observation, That we ought to be more Stedfast and Unmoveable in our Religion than other People are.*

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2. That we ought to out-strip them in good Life, in Zeal and Fervency, as much as we do in our Principles and Advantages.

First, That we ought to be so much more stable and settled in our Religion than others are in theirs, forasmuch as we have better Grounds for it. Let us walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever ; that is, Let us not stagger and falter, and be tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine ; for we know what and whom we have believed. It's true, we ought not to be stubborn and obstinate in our Opinion, nor peremptory and dogmatical in every punctilio, as if it were impossible for us to be one jot wiser than we are ; yet, on the other side, we ought not to be Seekers, when we have already found the Pearl of great price : *Quid opus est inquisitione post Jesum Christum, aut curiositate post Evangelium,* (said Tertullian ;) There is no cause to be Sceptical and unresolv'd in our Principles, wavering and unsettled in our Minds, since we have a Religion revealed from Heaven by the Son of God himself, confirmed by innumerable and unquestionable Miracles, sealed with the Blood of Millions of Martyrs, and confirm'd

confirm'd by Sixteen or Seventeen hundred Years Experience.

A *Pagan* would be stedfast in his blind Superstition, for which he knows no better reason than the Laws of his Countrey, or Tradition from his Fore-Fathers, and which perhaps at last resolved it self into no better Original than Poetical Fiction, or at best, Reason of State: *Jer. 2. 10, 11.* the Prophet upbraids the Jews after this manner; *Pass over the Isles of Chittim, and see; send unto Kedar, and consider diligently if there be such a thing. Hath any nation changed their gods, which yet are no Gods? but my people have changed their glory, for that which doth not profit: And then exclaims, Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this, saith the Lord.*

And for this very People of the Jews, how shamefully light and inconstant soever they were in their former days, and howsoever ridiculous they were in their fondness towards Novelty, and Pagan Superstitions; yet after the Babylonish Captivity, when they had thoroughly seen the folly and madness of Idolatry, as well as smarted for their former Wantonness, they now grow to such an utter abhorrence of Idols, that they were guilty

of Superstition of another kind ; and whatever other Sins they lived in, they abominated Idolatry in the highest degree, and were not only exceedingly staunch and firm to the True God, but exceedingly shie and suspicious of some very innocent Institutions, lest they shou'd in the least border upon Idolatry, or preface to an Innovation ? And shall we have a mind to return to a *Babylonish* Slavery again ? Nay, Shall we who have tasted the Fruits of *Canaan*, long after the *Flesh-pots*, the *Onions* and *Garlick* of *Ægypt*, rank and fullom Superstitions ?

We see how resolute and almost incurably stubborn every poor deluded Sectary is in his Errors and Mistakes : And shall we, who have so Excellent, so Wise and Holy a Religion ; shall (I say) we only be light and sceptical, always hunting after Novelties. Let not the words of the Prophet *Elijah*, *1 King. 18. 21.* be too applicable to us, who upbraids them in this manner, *Why halt ye between two opinions ? If Baal be God, serve him ; but if the Lord be God, then follow him.* If we consider the Nature and Consequence of Religion, it will easily appear to be a thing necessary to
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be resolved of one way or other ; and if we consider the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life, it will seem high time to come to a Resolution in that Point : Why then, if we have been imposed upon, and deceived hitherto with a bad Religion, do we not cast it off, and take up that we will trust to ? But if we have (as certainly we have) the best Religion in the World : If our Religion be the most Ancient, the most Credible, the most Easie, and the most Effectual to make us Good and Happy, (as I have shewed ;) Why then should we not be *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord ?* But this brings me to my Second Inference, *Viz.*

Secondly, It is our Duty, in consequence of the Premises, not only to be Stable and Resolved, but to be Zealous and Fervent in our Religion : Not only to shew by our Lives and Practice what God, and what Religion we are of, which too many fall short in ; but that by eminent Vertue, and Remarkable Piety and Devotion, we demonstrate the Greatness of our God, and the Excellency of our Religion ; and that we endeavour to out-vie all

those in Life and Practice, whom we either Pity or Despise or Condemn for their Mistaken Principles.

What Devotion the Heathen paid to their Gods, witness the numerous and laborious Rites they observed to the Honour of them: The stately Temples they Erected and Dedicated to them, some of which, as that of *Diana* at *Ephesus*, and that of *Eleusinium* in *Attica*, were the Wonders of the World: witness also the costly Sacrifices they offer'd to them, sometimes a whole *Hecatomb*, or an Hundred Fat Oxen at a time; sometimes *Ver Sacrum*, or the Choice of every thing which the Spring produced; besides the Gold and Frankincense, the Gums and Spices; the Charge of which last alone was so great an Expence, that, in *Tertullian's* time, they upbraided the Christians with a Cheap Religion, and as if they forsook Idolatry only to save Charges: particularly *Cyrus*, in the Apocryphal History of *Bell and the Dragon*, will needs prove *Bell* to be a God, from hence, viz, because he spent him every day twelve measures of fine Flower, forty Sheep, and six great vessels of Wine. I must needs say, it was but a sorry Argument of *Bell's* Divinity, but it was
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an undoubted Evidence of *Cyrus* his Devotion.

Now shall blind *Pagans* be thus large-hearted towards dumb Idols, and We be stingy and close-fisted towards the Living God? Nay, shall Idolatry be horribly afraid of being guilty of Sacrilege, (as we may find they were upon all occasions,) and shall those that *abhor Idols* never boggle at it?

A sordid covetous *Jew* wou'd, upon occasion, have spared a Fat Bullock out of his Stall, for a Sacrifice to his God; and shall any thing that is called a Christian, besides *Judas*, say, *Cur perditio hæc*? Shall only Christians, I say, be for a Cheap and Frugal Religion? Especially, shall we think much to offer up our Brutal Passions, or the Incense of Devout Prayers, or our Hearts and Affections, which put us to no Damage?

To go farther: A Consciencious *Mahometan* will go to his Mosque to Prayers thrice in a Day, will endure tedious Fastings, and undergo painful Pilgrimages, nay, will not drink one drop of Wine all his Life, only because his Quaking Prophet *Mahomet* enjoind these Observances: And shall Christians

shrink and shuffle at the *easy* Token of Christ Jesus ?

Again, A *Pythagorean*, out of Reverence to the Name of God, and to preserve himself from all possibility of Perjury, will not Swear at all : And will Christians Blaspheme that Holy and Dreadful Name, by Oaths and Perjury too ?

They of the *Church of Rome* use such Deference towards their Church, that they will submit by an Implicit Faith, and stoop to a blind Obedience, rather than endanger the Peace, or infringe the Authority of that Society : And shall We, who worthily value our selves upon the Temper and Wisdom of our Church, expresse no Regard, no Tenderneſs towards it, but tear all in pieces, for every petty Opinion, and idle Capricio of our private Heads ? Nay, shall Others worship a Crucifix with more Devotion than We do the very Son of God himself, now sitting at the Right Hand of God ?

To say no more : When every petty Sect amongst us seems wonderfully Devout in their Way, even to Superstition, and are inflamed with blind Zeal in their Errors ; shall We only be luke-warm
and

and indifferent, and not have one spark of Holy Zeal in our Devotions? Far be it from us; nay, let us be all Life, feel a mighty Passion, be in a kind of Extasie of Holy Affections towards our Great God in the Exercises of our Holy and Wise and Excellent Religion.

If we do not thus, we may assure our selves, that it is not all the Advantages of our Profession or Principles will save us; so far from it, that they will serve only to upbraid our Folly and Absurdity, to torment our Consciences, and to aggravate our Condemnation.

But if contrarywise, as we have better Principles, and more Light and Reason on our Side; so we have proportionably more Steadiness in our Minds, more Fervency in our Spirits, more Holiness in our Hearts and Lives. Then shall our Faith support us in all Distresses, and our Piety entitle us to the Divine Favour and Blessing. Our Religion shall be an Honour to us, and be Venerable in the Eyes of all the World. Then shall our Church recover its Numbers, its Peace, and all its Glories, and stand the shock of all its Adversaries, as being *built upon a Rock,*

Rock, which the Gates of Hell cannot prevail against ; which God grant, for his Son Jesus Christ his sake our Lord ; To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Everlasting Glory, &c.

A SER.

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

ALDERMEN

AND

CITIZENS of LONDON.

St. MATTH. xvi. 6.

Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadduces.

THere are Two very common and very unhappy Miscarriages in the External Management of Religion. Whilst (on the one side) some Men think themselves obliged severely and rigorously to Prosecute all that differ from them, although

although it be but in meer Opinions, or the Circumstantials of Religion. And others (on the other hand) seem so cold and unconcern'd in this great Affair, as if all Religions were alike; and it were perfectly indifferent what Principles a Man entertained, so he had but some kind of Devotion.

The former of these Mistakes takes its rise from too confident a presumption of our own Judgment, and a fond and groundless pretence to Infallibility, and therefore exacts of all other Men a Conformity to our Measures. The latter proceeds from as unreasonable a Diffidence and Distrust of the Grounds of Believing, as if there was really no *Keutheion* or Standard of Truth, and Falshood; and consequently, these last sort of Men are as void of Faith, as the other were of Charity: To be sure, both of them are very dangerous; forasmuch as the one beginning in Confidence, ends in Cruelty; the other beginning in *Scepticism*, commonly ends in *Atheism*.

But both these Dangers may in a great measure be avoided, and great Light gained towards the government of our selves in this weighty and difficult Business, by attending to the Carriage of our
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our Saviour towards the several Sects of the *Jews* respectively. For whereas it is well known, that there were three notable Parties amongst them, commonly distinguish'd by the Names of the *Essenes*, the *Pharisees*, and the *Sadduces* ; it is very remarkable concerning the first of them, namely, the *Essenes*, That though they were very numerous at the time of our Saviour, and withal, held several very odd and unjustifiable Opinions ; yet our Saviour is so far from all Bitterness and Severity towards them, that we do not find that he makes any kind of Reflection upon them : but for the other two, *viz.* the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, he upon all occasions sharply inveighs against them, and severely exposes them.

Now the reason of this very different Carriage of our Saviour seems to be this ; That the *Essenes*, though they were mistaken in some Opinions, yet were sincere in their Minds, harmless in their Lives, quiet and peaceable in their Spirits ; they contented themselves to enjoy their own Consciences, and let other Men alone ; they were not a Confident and Boysterous sort of Men, that must either have the sole Govern-
ment

ment of the World, or else be always plotting and contriving of Mischief ; but humble and modest, and so capable of being recovered from their Errors. But the other two Sects, *viz.* the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, they were quite another sort of Men, Pretenders to Infallibility, and consequently presumptuous and overbearing, perpetual Dictators in Opinion, fastuous and disdainful towards all others, too wise in their own eyes to learn of any one, and too sanctimonious to be reproved by any body ; withal, they were a Crafty and Projecting sort of Men, that must either Rule or Confound the World. Our Saviour therefore (to teach us to make a Discrimination in the like cases) as I observed, gently passes by the *Essenes*, but always sets himself severely against the two other Sects, and particularly here in my Text, gives his Disciples caution against them, *Take heed and beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadduces.*

The special occasion of these words was this : If we look to the beginning of this Chapter, we find these two busie Sects (though at other times they had hot Disputes between themselves, yet now) lay their Heads together and conspire

spire against our Saviour ; but (as the usual guise of Hypocrites is) they come to him very demurely with these words, *Master, we wou'd see a Sign from thee.*

What, had they had no Signs hitherto ! Had Jesus wrought no Miracles amongst them all this while ? or, were these Men only strangers to all the great Passages of that time ?

But, *We would see a Sign from Heaven.* And why a Sign from Heaven ? Wou'd that be more unexceptionable than any he had hitherto given them ? Wou'd this convince them ? No, that was not their Errand ; they came not to be converted, but to be harden'd ; they had a mind not to believe, and seek only a colour for their unbelief ; they ask him therefore for that which they verily thought he would not grant them, that they might have some pretence for their Infidelity.

Now therefore, our Saviour having discovered their Design, and detected their Hypocrisie, in the 2d, 3d, and 4th Verses in my Text, turns himself towards his Disciples, and gives them this serious caution against them, and all such kinds of Men, *Take heed and beware, &c.*

For

For the full opening of which, I will briefly enquire into these Four things.

- I. What is the importance of this metaphorical expression *Leaven* ; and what our Saviour means by the *Leaven of Pharisees and Sadduces*.
- II. More particularly we will enquire what was the peculiar *Leaven* of these two Sects, so often mention'd in the *New Testament*.
- III. We will consider what was the Danger of that *Leaven*, and its contrariety to the Doctrine and Design of our Saviour.
- IV. And Lastly, We will enquire what this Caution of our Saviour implies, and what he would have his Disciples to do, when he bids them *Take heed and beware, &c.*

And by that time I have given an Account of these Four things, I shall not only have open'd the full scope of the Text, but I hope every attentive Auditor will be satisfied of the seasonableness of this Subject for the present Time.

I begin

I begin with the *First*, viz. What our Saviour means by *Leaven*. In the words following my Text, *ver. 7.* we find that the Disciples took our Saviour literally, and reflecting on themselves for their omission to provide Bread and Necessaries for the Voyage which they were now entering upon, though he had obliquely reproved their carelessness in that particular, and that he had thence took occasion to interdict them all Trade and Civil Commerce with those two Sects of Men. But by the 12th *verse* they understand their Master's mind better, and knew at length, *that he spake not of the Leaven of Bread, but of the Doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadduces.*

Indeed, it is usual with our Saviour, by that Metaphor, to represent *Doctrine*, whether good or bad ; for *Mat. 13. 33.* he compares his own Institution to it, saying, *The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.* And the Resemblance is very fit and natural ; for as it is the nature of *Leaven*, that it works insensibly, quickly insinuates it self, and universally diffuses its Efficacy over the whole Mass into which it is put ; so, in like manner,

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Doctrine

Doctrine works upon the Minds of Men, and gives a tincture of its own Nature and Temper to them ; inſomuch as that ſuch as a Man's Perſuaſions and Principles are, ſuch ordinarily at leaſt will his Life and Practice be.

It is true, indeed, that ſometimes Mens Lives are better than their Principles, and ſometimes alſo worſe ; for it may fall out, that Men of very unhappy and miſchievous Opinions may yet live ver-
tuoſly, when the probity of their Temper is ſuch, as that it Antidotes them againſt the Malignity and Venome of their Perſuaſions. And, on the other ſide, it is no unfrequent (though an unhappy) ſpectacle, to behold others of very noble and generous Principles, as to *Doctrine*, yet to live very lewd and profligate Lives ; ſuch Men *with-holding the truth in unrighteouſneſs*, (as the Apoſtles Phraſe is,) or Outfacing the Light, and Debauching their Conſciences, in compliance with their Luſts, and carnal or ſecular Interests.

But, as I ſaid, ordinarily it is otherwiſe : For ſuch a ſtate of Contradiſtion to Principles muſt needs be violent and unnatural ; and the Lives and Actions of Men do as reaſonably bear proportion
to

to the Principles of their Minds and Consciences, as it is natural for the Stream to rise as high as its Source and Fountain, and no higher. Hence it is that our Saviour, *Mat. 12. 33.* saith, *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or the tree corrupt, and the fruit corrupt.* And again, *Mat. 6. 23.* he pronounces, *If the light that is in thee be darkness, that darkness must be great and intolerable.* To the truth of which Observation, the general Experience of all the World bears ample testimony; amongst several Instances of which, I cannot but remark a very pertinent passage of an Heathen Historian, in the *Life* of that wicked Emperor *Tiberius*; his words concerning him are these, *Erat circa Deos negligentior, quippe Mathematicæ addictus, persuasionisque plenus omnia fato agi*: which I render thus, *q. d. Tiberius* was a profane Prince, careless of Religion, and without any Devotion towards God; and no wonder, for he was an Admirer of *Astrology*, and full of the opinion, that the Stars or Fate govern'd the World, and not God.

And, in short, this is the true reason of all Education, and of all the Care and Diligence that evil and good Men use in

propounding and propagating good Doctrine, and preventing the contrary; not that they think God is pleased with dry Opinions and Speculations, but because they are aware that Principles draw on Practices, and that evil Opinions corrupt good Manners. But so much for that : I proceed,

In the *Second* place, to enquire what was the peculiar *Leaven* of these *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, which our Saviour thus cautions against. And for this, the learned Jewish Historian, *Josephus*, in his 13th Book of *Antiquities*, and in his 2d Book of the *Jewish Wars*, hath given us a very exact Account of all the Sects of Religion among that People, and from him I shall present this Auditory with the substance of what he delivers touching the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, wherein we are at present concerned.

And, First, It is notorious that the Sect of the *Sadduces* utterly denied the being of Angels and Spirits, or of all Spiritual Substances, and acknowledg'd nothing but Matter or Body in the whole Universe ; and consequently hereof, they must also renounce the Immortality of the Soul, the Resurrection of the Body, and Eternal Life in the World to come :
whereas,

whereas, on the contrary, the *Pharisees* acknowledged all the aforefaid great Articles, as we learn, *Act*. 23. 8. Only this is to be added withal, That these latter entertained so many Legendary Stories about these great Points, and had such very crasie Notions of them, that they thereby rendred the very Doctrines ridiculous and incredible.

Again, The *Sadduces* were gross Idolaters of the Letter; and as they received only the Law of *Moses*, (excluding the Prophets, and all other sacred Writings,) so they understood the Books of the Law in the most crass and literal sense, and admitted not of any interpretation or consequence from it, tho' never so clearly and naturally deduced. On the other side, the *Pharisees* not only received the whole Scripture of the *Old Testament*, but besides were great *Patrons* of Oral Tradition, and allowed as great or greater Authority to it than the Written Word; and consequently thought themselves obliged under as great a necessity to the observance of those things that came down to them by the Tradition of their Fathers, as to those they found written in the Law and the Prophets; from whence it came to

pals (as it must needs do) that their *Creed* became Vast and Voluminous, and their Devotion was clogg'd with innumerable Rites and Ceremonies.

The Result of all which is this ; That the *Pharisees* had too much Faith (such as it was,) and the *Sadduces* (properly speaking) none at all. The *Sadduces* could upon their Principles have no ground for any Religion or Piety ; and the *Pharisees*, by their prodigious Additions to God's Institution, had quite corrupted and lost the true Idea of Religion. In short, Whatever cold Pretences a *Sadducee* could make to Civility or Morality, it is evident, he could have no Devotion. On the contrary, the very Character of a *Pharisee* was a confident Devotionist, without Morality.

Now, from what hath been delivered in this short Account of these two Sects, it will be easie to discern the reason why our Saviour gives such caution against their *Leaven*, and what the Mischief and Danger to his Doctrine and Design was from each of them singly, or both together. Which is the

Third Enquiry. But because herein lies especially the Emphasis of the Text,

I will

I will give a more particular Account of this Matter, as followeth.

And first, as touching the *Sadduces* : It is manifest by what hath been said, that their *Leaven* was the same with that of the *Epicurean* Philosophers, and could by no means be a Principle of Conscience or Religion, but a Doctrine calculated for this present Life ; for believing neither Angel nor Spirit, nor any thing to be in the World but meer Matter, it was impossible they should have any concern for another World, and consequently they could have no Religion, only as the Law of *Moses* was *Lex Terræ*, the Law of the Land ; so far it stood them in hand to observe it, or at least to pretend an external conformity to it, for the sake of their secular Interests and Advantages. To be sure, such Principles could lay no Obligation upon their Consciences ; and therefore they were the truest Race of *Latitudinarians*, and could comply with whatsoever was uppermost, and upon that score could not withstand the Temptation of being of the Religion of the *Prince*, whatever it was.

Accordingly, it is observable in a parallel place to this of my Text, namely, *Mark* 8. 15. for the *Leaven* of the *Pha-*

risees, we have the *Leaven* of *Herod*, as signifying the same thing; for these Men, it seems, consistently enough with their Principles, could flatter that vile *Prince*, so far as to cry him up for the *Messias*.

It was, I say, a Sect or *Leaven* fit for Men of Covetous and Ambitious Designs, and was successful to those purposes; for *Acts* 5. 17. we find the great Council, or *Sanhedrin* of the *Jews*, chiefly consisted of those of this *Leaven*.

These Men were of the Spawn of the *Leviathan*, and derived the Sanction of Religion from Humane Legislation; and the Commands of God obliged no farther than they were enacted by the Civil Magistrate.

Besides all this, they had the right knack of Trimming between all Religions; for whatsoever was the inward Opinion of their Mind, they could conceal or deny or mince the matter, so that their Persuasion should never expose them to any Damage, nor their Conscience interfere with their Interests.

Now, the Christian Religion, which our Saviour came to introduce and to plant in the World, being not only a very strict and holy, but a most solemn
and

and serious Institution: Nothing could be more contrary to it, than such loose Principles as these; his was a Religion fitted to please God, not to flatter and humour Men: It was a Religion design'd for the saving of Mens Souls in another World, and to fit them for Eternal Life, and not to serve a Turn, or to save a Stake in this World. Upon all which, there can be no wonder that he earnestly cautions against the *Leaven* of the Sadducees which undermined the Principles of all Religion.

And then in the next Place, for the Religion of the Pharisees, that (by what was said in the Description of their *Leaven*) consisting of so many incredible Articles of Faith, grounded only upon Tradition and legendary Stories, and of such innumerable trifling and arbitrary Rites and Ceremonies, and yet made essentially necessary to Salvation, was utterly contrary to the whole Tenor and Design of the Gospel, as might be made appear in innumerable Instances, of which I will here specify only these five Particulars following.

In the first Place, a principal Design of our Saviour in the Doctrine of the Gospel, was to instruct Men with right
Notions

Notions of God, which is not only the first and most immediate Honour to the Divine Majesty, but the only solid Foundation of all Vertue and Piety : The right Apprehension of God's Perfections and Attributes, being the great Obligation upon our minds, to reverence and observe him in general, and being of great Use also, to direct us in the particular Instances of our Duty towards him. Now the Pharisees Superstition was contrariwise very apt to breed in Men, very mean and unworthy Notions of the Divine Majesty ; and so tended naturally both to confound the Measures, and to subvert the very Ground and Reason of Piety and Vertue.

Partly, as it mightily abated of his Grandure and Majesty whilst it represented him, as insisting upon so many little things as carried neither Weight nor Worth, nor intrinsic Reason in them. We always count it an Argument of a little Mind, to be wrought upon by meer Complements, to be pleased with Trifles, and to be offended with such ceremonious Omissions : And we cannot naturally esteem him to be a wise and great Man, whom we observe to be of that Temper ; much less can
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we imagine that he should be an infinitely wise God, a full, perfect, and self-sufficient Being, that will endure to be flattered with Ceremonies, be forced with Gifts, be propitiated with formal Oblations, be complemented with external Addresses, imposed upon by shows and shadows, or be offended for the want of any such things. Now the Pharisees *Leaven* consisting wholly of these, without Regard to true Piety, and generous Obedience and Conformity of Heart and Life to him, quite clouded and obscured the Glory of his Divinity, and rendred him more like a Man than a God, and indeed more like a little, necessitous, narrow-minded Man, than a wise and a great one.

Partly, as it rendred him an unbenevolent and captious Deity, such an one as insisted upon very Punctilio's, and was prone to take Advantage of his Creatures upon the smallest Omissions; the Effects of which must needs be, that Men might be possibly tempted to fear, and to stand under the slavish Dread of such a God, but it was plainly impossible they should love him; without which there can be no Life nor Soul in Religion.

Above

Above all this, the Pharisaical *Leaven* represented the Divine Majesty as a selfish and tyrannical Being, as if he looked only at his own ends, and had no regard to the good of his Creatures, and more aimed at the obtaining his own Will of them, than had any respect to the true Use and Reason of things, or Design of the Good and Happiness of Men: For how could it be otherwise; or how could Men think otherwise of him, that insisted as much upon clean Hands as upon a pure Heart; that was as much offended with the Omission of a Ritual, as of a Moral Precept, and that would take the Sacrifice of a Beast, in the Exchange for Obedience of a Man. Now the Doctrine of the Pharisees bringing in such Apprehensions of Religion as these are, must needs therewithal introduce very mean, low and unworthy Notions of God, and thereby undermine true Piety, and especially that of the Gospel.

Again, in the second place, the Design of our Saviour was to make Religion easie and delightful, and not only passible, but acceptable to all Men; that so his Institution might become the Religion of all the World, the truly Catholick Religion.

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To this purpose, he was to lay open all Inclosures, to pare off all Superfluities, to retrench the Redundance of troublesome and unnecessary Ceremonies; so to bring Religion into as narrow a Compass as was possible, that it might fall in the better with the Occasions of humane Life; and that the Affairs of Heaven and Earth might not interfere, he was to make it fully reasonable, and the Reason of it so conspicuous, as that it might commend it self to the Minds of all Men; he was to accommodate it to humane Nature in general, so that no Quality or Condition of Life should be incapable of it, that it should be impossible to no Constitution; excluded from no Place, Climate or Country; that it should be inconsistent with no Form of Government, nor inconvenient for any Age or time of the World.

All this was aim'd at in the Institution of Christian Religion; and all this was crossed and contradicted by the *Leaven* of the Pharisees, for that consisted of so many Articles of Faith, as it was impossible to perswade all Men of: It had so many Rites and Ceremonies, peculiar to one Country, or Climate, or Place, or Condition, or Constitution of Men;

Men ; and others so numerous, as were very troublesome to those that were most conscientious of them, and most of them founded upon such Reasons, as few Men could be satisfied with, and yet all of them made indispensably necessary ; that it became not only a very uneasy Religion, but impossible to a great part of Men, and unacceptable to all: And therefore, was so far unfit to become the Catholick or Universal Religion ; that it could be only the Cognizance of a Sect and Party, and fitter to divide the World than to unite it.

It must needs have been very burthensome to the Bodies of Men, to be bound to observe so many washings and Instances of external Cleanness, as their Superstition required: And it could not but be very troublesome to the Minds and Memories of Men, to retain so many little things as were strictly to be observed, and yet could not take hold of a Man's mind, because they had no Foundation in Reason: And above all, it must needs be intolerable to the Consciences of Men, and hold them in perpetual Anxiety and Solitude, when a Man's Duty was so large, as that he could scarce ever tell when he had done, and yet

yet every thing was alike necessary, and so the Danger was fatal, if he omitted or failed in any part of it. Upon all these Accounts, Pharisaism contradicted the Design of our Saviour in the Institution of Christianity; and therefore he cautions his Disciples against it.

Moreover, Thirdly, such a troublesome and circumstantial way of Religion as that of the Pharisees; under the form, supplants the very Power of Godliness: Partly, as these nice and troublesome observances weary the minds of Men and exhaust their best Spirits; and so that Zeal is spent upon Trifles which should have been reserved for more weighty Occasions: As we commonly observe of a bad Diet, that it not only corrupts the Humours of the Body, filling it with ill Juices, but also clogs and satiates the Natural Appetite of the Stomach, and deadens it to all those things that might be wholesome and beneficial; but principally, this pompous Form undermines the Power of Religion, as it renders Men prone to hope to make amends for the Defect of the latter, by the Redundance of the former; for it is too common and usual for Men to think to expiate Immorality by Superstition: And we generally

generally observe, that those who are over-precise in little matters, are apt to indulge themselves too much in great.

Thus, our Saviour upbraids these very Men we speak of, *Matth. 23. 23.* That under pretence of being more than exact in *Tythings*, *Mint*, *Annis*, and *Cummin*, they neglected the weighty matters of the *Law*, *Justice*, *Mercy*, and *Faith*: And again, *Matth. 15. 3.* He tells them they notoriously made void the *Commandments of God through their Traditions*; for by their *Corban*, they legitimated Unnaturalness towards their Parents; by their long Prayers, they hoped to make amends for devouring Widows Houses, and by outward washings, to expiate their inward Impurities: And for the sake of these things, our Saviour (whose Design was to introduce true and unfeigned goodness, and sincere and unaffected Piety) severely interdicts this *Leaven*.

Furthermore, in the fourth place, as it is usually observed, that light things are puffy and turgid, so it is certain that such an empty and pompous Religion as that of the Pharisees, usually swells and puffs Men up with Pride and Conceit of themselves, which Temper is the furthest

theft projection from that of the Gospel. Such a Train of Observances as they had, made a very glorious and sanctimonious Show, and raised the Admiration of the World, and thereby deceived them into a great Opinion of themselves. It was an easie and cheap way to Saintship ; for the observation of Rites and Ceremonies cost them little Self-denial and Mortification, and yet it served to make them to be thought the only People. Accordingly they had a Saying amongst the Jews, in those times, that, *If there were but two Men to go to Heaven, the one would be a Scribe, and the other a Pharisee.* Thus were these Airy Bubbles blown up to Heaven, both in the Conceit of the World, and in their own Opinion : so we observe in the Gospel, *Luk. 18. 11.* Whereas the poor *Publican* is dejected in the Presence of God, in contemplation of his own Miscarriages, and therefore dares scarce look up towards Heaven, but modestly smites upon his Breast, and prays, *God be merciful to me a sinner.* The *Pharisee*, transported with Vulgar Applause and Self-admiration, boldly out-faces God and Man, and cries out, *God, I thank thee that I am not like other men ; for I*

P *fast*

fast twice a week, and pay tythes of all I possess, &c. and therefore challenges Heaven, as due to his merit.

Not unlike Servants are the new-invented Orders of Modern *Pharisees*, who, upon the account of their Observation of certain Rules of their own Invention, and of the Vows of fantastick Poverty, uncommanded Abstinence from Flesh or Marriage, and blind Obedience to their Superiors, call themselves the *Religious*; and all the World of good Christians besides, the *Seculars*, or, *the Men of this World*. Of such a flatulent nature is Superstition, and thus fastuose and supercilious doth it render all the Profelytes to it; and therefore our Saviour, whose intention was to bring Humility and Modesty into fashion, cautions earnestly against this *Leaven*.

Fifthly and lastly, Our Saviour, by his Institution, designed to bring in Gentleness and Kindness, Love and Goodwill amongst Men: But such an External and Ritual Religion as that of the *Pharisees*, naturally tends to make Men quarrellsome and contentious, carnal and sanguinary. For, in the first place, the Materials or Instances of Superstition are many and numerous, and so liable to be

be mistaken : for, *in many things we offend all* ; or, where our Obligation is very large, our Duty is very nice and difficult. Again, such things being neither manifestly required by clear Reason, nor by evident Revelation, must needs be always uncertain, and so become Matter of endless Dispute and Contention ; especially if all things be a like necessary, and that Eternal Life depends upon every Punctilio : No wonder if Men be fierce and eager ; for he that is mortally vulnerable in every part, must needs be very jealous and curious. To all which add, That the Man who hath his Religion at his fingers ends, or *in ritibus ad solos digitos pertinentibus*, (as *Lactantius* expresses it,) this Man must needs be very peremptory and dogmatical, very decretory and decisive ; so that there can be no dissenting from such a Man without *Anathema's* ; and his Superstition, by all these Considerations, will raise him to such a heat and confidence, that he will think he doth God good service, to kill those that differ from him.

Of this *St. Paul* himself was an Example ; he was bred at the feet of *Gamaliel*, a Learned Traditionary Doctor,

and, after the strictest Sect of the Jewish Religion, a *Pharisee*; and all this served to inflame him against Christ and his Religion and Disciples, to such a degree, that he confesses he was mad against them, and thought he ought to do whatsoever he did or could do against that Name and Institution.

The same thing *Tertullian*, Fourteen-hundred Years ago, observed of the Jews in general; his words are, *Synagogæ Judæorum fontes persecutionum*: The Jewish Zealots were constantly the great Inflamers of Persecution against Christianity; and they, when they could not do it themselves, exasperated the Pagans, and put them upon it.

A Jewish Spirit is everlastingly a persecuting Spirit; and of all Mankind, a *Pharisee* (whatever he may pretend) can never be in earnest for Toleration. I would to God the Experience of all Ages had not borne too undeniable a testimony to the truth of this Observation, and that modern Pharisaism had in this respect mended the matter. But *Leaven is Leaven*, and will ever have the same operation.

The Man that considers his Religion, and weighs the Reasons of it before he embraces

embraces it, will be gentle and charitable towards those that differ from him, or are not of his attainment ; he considers the shortness of Humane Understanding, that he may be deceived himself, and therefore pities those that are so ; he makes allowance for different Constitutions, several ways of Education, and the Prejudices incident to Men in this World : but the blind *Zealot*, that believes with his Will, not his Understanding, that sees with other Mens Eyes, and enslaves his Mind to other Mens Dictates ; in a word, the *Traditionary Pharisee* is Bold and Violent, Cruel and Unmerciful.

And the Man that is heartily and sincerely Vertuous, he is pitiful and compassionate to the Infirmities of Mankind ; he considers humane Frailty, and the Temptations we are beset withal ; how many times we do that which we cannot allow or justifie ; and judges of other Men as he would be judged himself : But the supercilious *Pharisee* makes no reflection upon himself, and therefore hath no mercy nor compassion towards others.

St. Austin, in Answer to the *Manichees*, and particularly to that Epistle of theirs,

call'd *Fundamentum*, hath this Noble and Christian passage, *Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt quanto cum labore veritas inveniatur, & quam difficulter errores caveantur*; with many other excellent words to that purpose: *Let those* (saith he) *persecute you, who neither knew the difficulty of discovering Truth, and of avoiding Error*; but so will not I, who have Erred as you do, and hardly recovered the firm ground of Truth; that Work is only fit for them that have their Religion by Rote, and their Devotion by Instinct; that never studied for Knowledge, nor laboured for Vertue; that are Infallible by an Implicit Faith, and Devout without Piety; that is, those that are of the right *Leaven* of Pharisaism.

These, in short, are some of the Causes why our Saviour gave such a strict and solemn Charge against the *Leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadduces*. And now it is time to come to the *Fourth* and last Branch of my Text, namely, to shew what our Saviour means by this expression, *Take heed and beware*; and what is the Duty of his Disciples in this particular: And that I will now endeavour briefly to explain, and then conclude,

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In order to which, in the first place, it is to be observed, that the emphasis lies in the word *Leaven* : For it is not so much the *Men* of the Sect of the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces* that are to be avoided, as the *Leaven* of those Sects ; and that is so much the more to be taken care of, because there may be the *Leaven* of those Sects, though the *Name* be forgotten, and the *Men* so called be gone off the stage : And it is much to be doubted, or rather it is past doubt, that there is a *Leaven* of Pharisaism and Sadducism amongst Christians, as well as there was amongst the Jews ; and perhaps amongst *Protestants*, as well as *Papists* ; and therefore it will be our Duty to observe and distinguish it. As for Instance,

Where-ever we find a sort of Pretenders to the *Atomical* or *Epicurean* Philosophy, that assert there is nothing but Matter or Body in the Universe ; these Men, let them be otherwise never so Ingenious, or let them cover and disguise the business as well as they can, must necessarily, upon their Principles, take away the being of Angels and Spirits, and all the concern of another

World ; and therefore are of the *Leaven* of Sadducism.

Or if there be in this Age those that would persuade themselves and others, that it is a piece of Superstition to be strait-laced in Conscience, or a kind of Fanaticism to be curious what Religion a Man is of, and that that whole Affair is matter of indifferency, since God is pleased with variety, or regards not what Principles Men are of, so they be Devout and Honest in their respective Perswasions : This Conceit, where-ever it is, is nothing better than a piece of the Old *Leaven* of Sadducism.

Or if there be those that assert, that the Religion of Christ Jesus is only to be of the Religion of the Prince and Countrey.

Or that whatsoever a Man believes in his Heart, it is lawful for him to conceal and disguise it, and to make profession of that which comports best with his Safety and Interest ; all this is Sadducism.

To give one Instance more on this Head : Whosoever they be that would persuade us, we must needs understand those famous words, *Hoc est Corpus meum*,
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in the gross literal sense, against all the Reason of the World, and the very Testimony of our Saviour ; this is neither better nor worse than a spice of old Sadducism.

And then, on the other side, (for the *Pharisees*,) where-ever we observe Men building their Faith and Religion upon Oral and unwritten Tradition, and equaling that to the Holy Scripture and written Word of God, this is Pharisaism.

Or where-ever we find Men imposing upon others a vast and voluminous *Creed*, and enjoining a world of nice Observances, under the peril of Eternal Damnation, (if they be not complied with) or the Yoke laid upon the Neck of the Disciples of our Lord, no whit inferior to that of Judaism ; in all this there is the Spirit of Pharisaism.

Where-ever we see Men lay mighty stress upon disputable Opinions, or to Save or Damn Men accordingly as they are of such or such a Party, here is the plain Genius of Pharisaism.

To name no more : Where-ever we observe Men to be mighty Pretenders to Devotion, but careless of Justice and Charity, or to *strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel* ; all this is the *Leaven*
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of Pharisaism, where-ever it is found, and to be avoided accordingly.

In the next place, let us consider the emphasis of these words of our Saviour, *Ὁπάτε καὶ δεγόμενέστε*, *Take heed and beware.* it is an earnest Expression that I do not remember to have observed above once more in the whole *New Testament*, and (to be sure) imports no less, than that great Application of Mind is required in this particular. *Religion* is certainly a business that deserves to be well considered of, and to be carefully examin'd, and well understood, as well as devoutly prosecuted ; nor is there any thing in this World, for the sake of which God gave us our Understanding, more than to enquire into this weighty Affair: And the least that can be made of the Charge here in the Text, is, that we by no means allow our selves supinely to swallow whatsoever is either first suggested, or imperiously dictated to us ; since such an Implicit Faith is the very first working of the *Leaven* of Pharisaism and Sadducism ; and the vindicating our selves to our selves, and the asserting the freedom of our own Thoughts, and liberty of judging for our selves, is the first step to true and generous Christianity, and the way to be
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everlastingly secured from the aforesaid *Leaven*. For Example :

If we freely consult our own Reason, we shall never be able to think of God Almighty as of a partial Deity, or an Excepter of Persons, that will save or damn Men in gross, accordingly as they shall be of such a Sect or Party. We shall never be able to imagine that a Great and Wise Majesty will have any great value for empty Forms, and meer Pageantry of Religion ; as if we had a Fancy like that of the *Pantomime* at *Rome*, who having been admired by the Rabble, would needs have the fondness to go also into the Capitol, and play his Tricks over before the Gods, as if God must needs be pleased with what the silly Multitude admired.

It can never enter into a considering Mans thoughts, that the Divine Majesty should be propitiated with Beads and Baubles ; that Money should purchase his Favour to the wicked Man ; that he should be corrupted with Bribes, or imposed upon and won with Complements.

In a word : No Man that hath and makes use of the Discretion of a Reasonable Creature, can think so unworthily
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of God, as that he should be fatally offended with little Mistakes in Opinion; or that he will cast away a very sincere and devout Man, meerly upon the account of a Ceremony under or over; and he that allows himself but this kind of modest freedom of Mind, hath made good provision against the Danger of the *Leaven* of Pharisaism and Sadducism.

Again, In the Third place: The most effectual security against the aforesaid *Leaven*, is to keep to the Holy Scripture, especially of the *New Testament*; to study that, and take all the measures of our Religion thence. If we trust to the Authority and Dictates of Men, or to the Customs and Fashions of the World, they will betray us to those *Leavens*; or if meerly upon unwritten Tradition, that, like a common Sewer, brings down, for the most part, the Trash and Rubbish of former Times, very often letting the most weighty Things sink and perish in the passage: For proof of which, we need no other Evidence but the experience of the Jews, amongst whom one cannot but admire what childish and ridiculous Stories this way of Tradition hath filled them with; insomuch that this Oral part of their Religion

Religion hath almost quite disparaged that which was Written, and Divinely revealed, meerly by the Vicinage and Conjunction with it.

Whereas, if we attend to, and study the Holy Scripture, that will not only preserve us from such mean and unworthy Notions of God and Religion, but will engage us in such a method as shall both make us better Men, and the World the better for us.

If we govern our selves by Tradition, and the Fancies of Men, then all our Care and Devotion will be laid out in cultivating an Opinion in Ceremonious Addresses to the Deity, in Pompous Oblations, or in Scrupulous Observance: but if we consult the Scripture, that will teach us, *that God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*; and that a pure Mind, and an Holy Life, are more acceptable to him than long Prayers, frequent Fasts, and the most costly Offerings: There we shall find, that the First and Great Commandment of God's Law, is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength*; and that whatever demonstrates sincere Love to him, be it little or much, is sure to procure his

his Favour. These we shall learn expressly, That the Lord our God is not pleased with the *Fat of Lambs*, nor propitiated with *Rivers of Oil*; neither doth he require the *Fruit of our Bodies* to expiate the *Sin of our Souls*; but, that we *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God*: The due Consideration of which passages of Scripture will effectually antidote us against the Infection of any of the aforesaid *Leavens*.

To all which, I add, in the last place, That if we do but mind the Nature and Notion of Christianity, and consider the Genius and Spirit of that Religion, we are safe; particularly, if we do but look upon it under the representation which those two words or phrases give of it, whereby it is called a *Reasonable Service*, and a *Spiritual Worship*.

As for the former, no Man can be so absurd, as to think that a *Reasonable Service*, which is built upon an Implicit Faith, and where a Man understands nothing of the Reason and Grounds of his Religion, but in a blind Obedience, servilely and brutishly gives himself up to the conduct of others, or when he worships God in a Language whereof he hath no knowledge or understanding.

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And as for the other phrase of a *Spiritual Worship* ; can any Man of common sense take that to be a Spiritual Religion, which is made up of Bodily Drudgeries, of meer Forms and Rites and Ceremonies ? But to be a Christian, is to have worthy Notions of God in our Minds, and a flame of fervent Piety and Devotion to him in our Hearts ; to Love him, to Fear him, to Trust in him, to be Holy and Just and Sober in our Lives, and to be Peaceable in our Spirits : Such a Religion as this is worthy of God, was fit for the Son of God to be the Author and Publisher of ; and the conscientious Observance of it will fit us for, and in due time bring us to the possession of the Heavenly Mansions above, and the Eternal Society of glorious Saints and Angels in Heaven : *Which God grant to us all, through the Merits and Mediation of the same Jesus Christ our Lord ; To whom be Glory and Honour and Adoration for ever and ever. Amen.*

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And as for the other phrase of a Spi-
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Honour and Adoration for ever and ever.
Amen.

A
SERMON

PREACH'D
JANUARY 26. 1689.

NUMB. xi. 4, 5, 6.

And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting : and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat ?

We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely ; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick :

But now our soul is dried away ; there is nothing at all but this manna before our eyes.

THIS Book of *Numbers*, besides a Muster-Roll of the several Tribes and Families of *Israel*, which it affords us in the former part (and from whence it hath its Name) presents us also with a Journal of the Motions of that mighty Host, or an History of the most remarkable Passages of their Forty Years Travel through the

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Wilderness, towards *Canaan*. And in the course of this History sets before our eyes a wonderful Scene of miraculous Providences on the one hand, and as strange and frequent Instances of Humane Folly and Frailty on the other. On God's part, a display of infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness and Patience: And on the part of the People, prodigious Infidelity, Stubbornness, Peevishness and Ingratitude. God Almighty had seen their Affliction in *Egypt*, and had heard their Groanings, and by a powerful Hand had rescued them from an horrible Slavery under an unrelenting Tyrant; and by the gentle Conduct of *Moses*, was leading them into possession of the good Land he had promised them. But they, instead of Thankfulness for so great a Deliverance, are perpetually quarelling with his Instruments or his Methods, or tempting and affronting his Divine Majesty; and which was most ingrateful of all, are continually upbraiding him with the remembrance of the good Things they had forgone in *Egypt*.

To In particular, sometimes they want Water, and then all God's Miracles of Power and Providence are forgotten; There is no help, but they must all be famished

famished in the Wilderness. Another time they want Bread, and then God and Moses are nosed with *Egypt* again, *Were there no graves in Egypt, but we must be brought hither to be starved?* Well, God gives them Bread to the full, *Manna*, Bread from Heaven, Angels-Bread. But this will not serve the turn neither, they must have *Flesh* too; and that not so much for necessity, as capriciously to try God's Rower: *Can God prepare a Table also in the Wilderness?* If not, they are presently for *Egypt* again: So in the Text, *the mixt multitude sell a lusting: and the children of Israel wept, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the cucumbers, and melons, and onions, and garlick, &c.*

In which passage of the Scripture, I observe these Four things:

- I. The peculiar Circumstances of this Mutiny or Murmuring.
- II. The Beginners or Ring-leaders of this Disorder.
- III. The quick and general Infection of this Mischief.
- IV. God's Resentment of their Carriage.

Which when I have opened, it will be easie to make Application of all to our own Case.

(1.) I begin with the First, *The Circumstances and Aggravations of this Murmuring*: And amongst them, these Four are most remarkable, viz.

First, *The Time of it*. It was now but about a Year and Two Months (as Divines compute) from their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and yet so quickly could they forget their own Sufferings, and God's Wonders; and nothing runs in their thoughts, but the *Fish*, the *Onions* and *Garlick*, &c. which they had there. A strange Levity and Inconstancy of Mind this! Had it been an Age or two after, one would not have so much wondered, that when Time (which effaces all things) had worn out the remembrance of their Hardships, their other Entertainments there might have been reflected on with some gust and delight; but so quickly to forget God and themselves too, argued them to be a true *Mobilee*.

And, Secondly, *Their Wantonness and Curiosity* was no less remarkable than their Levity and Inconstancy. They had Bread to the full, which might very well have satisfied them in a Wilderness; and especially when they were going to *Canaan*, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, they might well have dispens'd with

with some tolerable Inconveniences in the Way ; tolerable Accommodations might serve the turn in a Wilderness. But they had not only Bread enough, but delicious Bread, *Manna* : however, that will not do, they must have *Flesh* too ; they made a Pish at *Manna* ; *Nothing but this Manna*, say they.

Thirdly, *There was Insolence*, as well as Wantonness and Curiosity in the case : It was *Flesh* they desired, not so much for their Hunger, as for their Lust. They must have their Will, or else to *Egypt* again ; and it was more their design to tempt God, than to be gratified themselves. They must prescribe to God what Miracles he shall do for them ; they must have arbitrary Proofs of his Omnipotency, *Can God prepare a Table in the Wilderness* ? If he will not work Miracles, what and when they think good, they will follow him no farther, but to *Egypt* again.

Lastly, *There was a Profane Spirit* in all this ; a plain contempt of God and Religion. God had asserted them to be his own People ; had newly given them Laws, which it would have been both their Wisdom and Happiness to walk in. He intended to keep them a-while in

the Wilderness, to disuse them from the Superstitions of *Egypt*, and to train them by degrees into the Habits and Customs of the True Religion; and then shortly to place them in their own Land, under their own Laws and Princes, and far from any temptation of Apostacy from him and them; but they meditated a Relapse; they were indifferent as to this business of God and Religion; they would run the venture and hazard of Idolatry, and defiling their Consciences with the Follies of *Egypt*, rather than want the *Onions* and *Garlick*. So we see, a long time after this, in the Prophet *Isaiab's* time, *Isa. 30. 1, 2, 3, 4. They talk to go down to Egypt, and have not enquired at my mouth; their Princes were at Zoan, and Embassadors came to Hanes, &c. q. d.* They were negotiating a Peace between Me and the Gods of *Egypt*; they were contriving a *Concordat* between the True Religion and Idolatry; they would not stick out upon point of Religion, so they might accommodate their Secular Ends.

Thus much for the Matter of Fact it self.

(2.) In the *Second* place, I observe in the Text, the Beginners or Ring-leaders of

of this Sedition, a *mixed Multitude* : Who they were, we may guess by *Exod.* 12. 38. when the Children of *Israel* came up out of *Egypt*, it is said, *A mixed Multitude came along with them* ; that is, such as were not of the Race of the *Jews*, nor of any one Nation, Tribe or Family ; but a *Colluvies* of several Nations, or perhaps a Bastard-brood, part *Jew*, and part *Egyptian*, but of no certain Principles ; such as had their God and Religion to chuse, and had only the fancy to follow the fortune of the *Israelites* in this great and famous Expedition, in hopes to mend their own.

This *Vulgar*, this Rabble, begins the Mutiny, (as they are always wont to do,) and such are dangerous Incendiaries in all Societies : they have not only no Honour, nor Principles, nor Consciences ; but no Prudence, no Modesty, no Restraint ; there is no Handle to take hold of them by, to govern and manage them. Of these the Historian observes, *Inest omni populo malignum quiddam & querulum in Imperantes* ; “ The Populacy, or Rabble, “ is always a tumultuous ungoverned “ Beast.” They are of no Value, of no Industry nor Capacity, but to do Mischief ; *Ignarus quisquis seditiosus* : These

are usually the first in at every thing, and first out ; that first dishonour a good Enterprize by abetting it, and then betray it, by revolting from it.

(3.) *Thirdly*, I observe in the Text, the quick and general spreading and infection of this seditious Murmuring Humour ; the *mixed Multitude fell a lusting*, and presently all *Israel* put finger in the eye and weep for the Entertainments of *Egypt* ; like Fire, though it begin in a little contemptible Spark, it quickly diffuses it self, and bears down all before it ; sets all in a Combustion.

Example, especially of Evil, is too taking amongst the generality of Mankind : *Pecorum ritu sequimur anteceditum gregem, non qua eundum est, sed qua itur*, (as *Cato* observes of Sheep,) “ It is easier to drive a multitude of them, than a few ; get but some to go, and all the rest will follow.”

It is very unreasonable in it self, and therefore may seem strange, that evil Example should be more prevalent than good ; but Experience leaves us without doubt, that so it is for Matter Fact, and especially in the case of Mutiny or Sedition. Whilst there are (as there ever will be) a teachy, querulous, discontented

tented People, so long there will never want some pretence or other for Disturbance. Publick Affairs can never be conducted with that Even-hand, but there will be some Grievance or other to such over-tender and captious People; and the passionate representing of these, will expose the Authority even of *Moses* himself, and weaken the Hearts and Hands of well-meaning People. But,

Fourthly and Lastly, I observe God's resentment of this matter, ver. 1. of this Chapter; *And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; and the Lord heard it, and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost part of the camp.* And again, ver. 33. of this Chapter, though God gratified their Humour, yet, *while the flesh was between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and he smote them with a very great plague.* And beyond all this, in Chap. 14. v. 23. he takes up a Resolution, and solemnly swears, *That not a man of these, that had thus provoked him by their murmurings, should enter into the good land he had sworn unto their fathers to give them.*

And

And thus I have (as much as was sufficient to my purpose) open'd the Letter, or History of my Text : Let us now see how far this will concern our selves. And I doubt, it will be found a very easie matter to draw a parallel in the Sin and Folly of this present Generation ; and I pray God We be not in some measure parallel in the Judgment.

It cannot be denied, that we have lately had a signal Deliverance from a Slavery little inferior to that of *Egypt* ; and though there hath not appeared altogether so much of Miracles in the effecting it, yet there have been most signal Instances of the Divine Hand in bringing it about, particularly in infatuating the Councils, cowing the Spirits, baffling the Powers, and dissolving all the Forces that were ready to obstruct our Deliverance.

And now that we have escaped the House of Bondage, and come into some straits in our passage through the Wilderness, towards a state of Rest and Settlement, we fall a murmuring, and a thousand little Scruples and Jealousies run in our Heads, which were never thought of (or thought scorn of) before, yet now
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are able to make us wish we had never set out from *Egypt*.

Some are affrighted with the Difficulties before us, and dream of *Gyants* and *Anakims*, as if the Promised Land was to be obtained without conflict ; or, as if the God that miraculously delivered us out of *Egypt*, was not able to carry us through to *Canaan*.

Some false Spies mis-represent the Good Land, as if it was not worth the contending for ; and that our Religion, Laws and Liberties would not quit the cost.

Some suspect Religion and Reformation it self, as if it would be too strict for them ; and therefore their Mouths water after the *Onions* and *Garlick* they left behind them. *Others* complain of the Intermission of Trade ; *some*, of the Taxes and Burthens.

One sort murmurs, That they are not preferr'd to their mind, and that others are advanced above their Merits. *Another sort* repines, That their Party is not encouraged enough, and that some other Party hath too much of the Publick Countenance ; and all these look towards *Egypt* again.

And

And to enflame this Reckoning, we want not a *mixed Multitude* amongst us : From Abroad, *French Agents*, and *Popish Emissaries* ; at Home, all Discontented Persons, that love to fish in troubled Waters, and those whose Guilt renders them jealous of a Settlement ; all half-Protestants, and Papists in Masquerade ; as also Men of no Religion, but whose Interest is all the Conscience they have ; and together with these, some, who though perhaps they cannot digest downright Popery, yet the *Manna* of Reformation is too thin a Diet for their gross Stomachs ; but *Onions* and *Garlick*, a good hautguist of Superstition, will relish well with them : All these begin the Murmuring, and are ready to set the Multitude agog for *Egypt*.

Upon the whole Matter, the Parallel is but too easie and obvious, between our Condition and that of the *Israelites* hitherto. Now therefore it is time to take care that it go on no further, lest we match them in the Mischief and Punishment, as we seem to have done in the Folly.

In order to the prevention of which deplorable Calamity, I have a few things upon this occasion to offer to the Consideration

sideration of all true *English-men*, Lovers of their Countrey, and of the Protestant Religion : And though I know, I now shall be heard by few of those that are concern'd in the Advice, and perhaps by none of those that have most need of it ; yet I will make use of this Opportunity, to deliver my self with all sincerity in the case, to the intent that you that hear me, may report it to others of your Acquaintance ; and by that means (and the Blessing of God upon it) some check may be given to that Murmuring Spirit that is begun amongst us.

The sum of what I have to say, will be comprised in these Three Particulars :

First, That we will be intreated to reflect back a little, and to consider what our Condition was before we came into this Wilderness, and fell under the present Temptations to Discontent.

Secondly, That we will also look impartially about us, and view our present Condition, to the end that we may make the better Judgment, whether, ev'n now in the general, and for the main, we have not those Advantages which may countervail the objected Straits and Inconveniences ?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That we will look forward and consider, as discreet Men, what is likely to be the effect of our Murmuring, and of thinking of returning back to *Egypt*.

It will not, I presume, seem strange to you (who know me well) that I should (at this time especially) make use of this Freedom, since I am persuaded your own Thoughts and Experience of me, will acquit me from all suspicion of Partiality towards any Person or Party of Men whatsoever, in regard you are in some measure aware, That as I have neither been personally disoblig'd by the former Times, or Government ; so neither have I been (nor am I capable of being) bribed or bias'd by any Obligation from the present.

Therefore with the Sincerity and Good-will of an *English-man* towards his Native Country, and as a resolv'd Protestant for the Honour or Interest of that excellent Religion, I go on with my Intentions. And,

First, I earnestly beseech all my Brethren and Country-men, That before they suffer themselves to be tempted to murmur and repine at the present state of Things, they will reflect upon the

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Condition of our Affairs before this Revolution, and what it was likely to have come to, had it not pleased the Divine Providence to interrupt the course of Things.

And the time is not so long since, but that we may easily remember We were miserable enough ; nor were the Designs so obscure, or the Methods so intricate, but we might easily foresee, that we should quickly have been intolerably Unhappy, at that rate of Proceeding.

Do we not know, That all our Laws (contrived by the Wisdom, and defended by the Prowess of our Ancestors) were all cut off at one Blow by a *Dispensing Power* ?

Were not all, or at least most of the *Charters* in *England* (the Glory and Ensign of Honour to all the Cities and Great Societies of the Nation) confirm'd by all former Princes, owned by the Laws, and established by Ancient Custom, damn'd and dissolv'd at once ?

Was not the sacred Right of Property invaded, and Freeholds taken away (not only from Private Persons, but from the Noblest Societies) without form or colour of Law ?

And

And whether even our Lives themselves were not held at Mercy, one would be tempted shrewdly to suspect, who reflected upon the dreadful Instances of several Eminent Persons hurried out of the World, some one way, and some another.

In a word, Were not *Parliaments*, (the only Conservative of our Constitution, and Redress of our Grievances) either refused, as inconsistent with the Designs in hand; or endeavoured to be corrupted, fore-stalled, or the freedom of Chusing them, design'd, by new and unheard of Methods, to be for ever destroyed?

These things are too fresh in our Memories to need repetition, too plain to be denied, and too great in themselves to be aggravated; but,

Hæc olim meminisse juvabit —

And as for that great Affair of Religion (dearer to all true *Englishmen* than their very Lives) the prospect thereof was in those times very melancholy, when a Design was not only form'd, but begun to be put in execution, of laying a *Yoke* upon our Necks, which *neither we nor our Fore-fathers were able to bear.*
And

And in pursuance hereof, not only mercenary Pens were employed to expose and ridicule *Protestantism* in general; but care was taken to blow up, inflame and perpetuate the Divisions amongst *Protestants*; partly by odious Names of distinction, and partly by exasperating their Minds one against another, as that in conclusion all of them might be destroyed with the less pity or scandal.

It is true, the *Church of England* was all this while complemented, but never the securer from Destruction; witness the Imprisoning and severe treatment of Seven excellent Bishops at once, for but daring to understand the Project, and humbly interposing their Advice; and the Suspending another excellent Person of that Order, only for being too good a Man for so bad Times: witness also the Scorn cast upon the whole Body of the Clergy, in imposing a *Declaration*, to be read by them in all their Churches, wherein (according to the mannerly expression of that time,) *They should* (not only) *have been compell'd to eat their own dung*, but in truth, to be *Felo de se*, and to have cut their own Throats.

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To say no more therefore, our Condition was not unlike that of *Israel* in *Egypt* : We were vexed, oppressed, undermined, weakned, treated as Slaves ; and to assure and perpetuate our Slavery, foreign Forces were brought in, and more were intended to be brought in, to Nail our Ears to the Door-Posts for ever.

Or, if all this be not sufficient to make us sensible of the Condition we were then in, or going into, let us look upon the state of *France*, and especially of the poor *Protestants* there ; for that was design'd to be a Pattern and Precedent for us.

By All which together (the Particulars whereof I have rather intimated than represented) we see our ill state then, and that we had good cause to get out of *Egypt* as soon as we could, whatever beset us in the Wilderness. Which leads me to the Second thing I designed to speak to, *viz.*

Secondly, That we will be intreated impartially to consider, Whether our present Condition is not more tolerable than that we have escaped ? and, Whether we have any just Provocation from the present Inconveniences, to Murmur, and

and meditate a Revolt? It is true, we are yet but in a Wilderness, and there in want of many things; and we are beset with many Difficulties and Dangers, and perhaps too, have a long Journey (to *Canaan*) to a compleat Settlement; and especially there is the more likelihood of that, if we be Peevish, and obstruct the way to our own Happiness. However, take things as they are, and at worst we may have many things to oblige us to be thankful for our present Condition, and none to make us repent of the Change.

In the first place, we have a KING and a QUEEN both of our own Religion; a Felicity we have not for many Years had experience of, and for want of which, the state of Protestantism hath been fluctuating and uncertain, and cou'd never make any good progress: a Prince and Princess we have now, whose Interest conspires with their Education and Choice; and who abandon themselves, if they grow cold or indifferent in the Protestant Religion. Now, of what Consequence this One thing is, if we had not learn'd by our former Experience, common Prudence would instruct us; since it cannot be expected, but

that a Prince of another Religion, if he have any Zeal for it, will be sure secretly to undermine that which is Rival to his own Persuasion, if he have not the Power or the Courage openly to assault and suppress it : Whereas now (by the Blessing of GOD) we have that comfortable Prophecy accomplish'd of a King and Queen, *Nursing Father and Mother to this Church* : We enjoy our Religion, with all the Accommodations of it, as fully and as securely as our Hearts can wish ; and not only so, but *Piety* and *Vertue* lifts up its Head ; and all *Profaneness*, which grew Rampant heretofore, is in a great measure put out of Countenance : nor ought it to trouble us, that some Men (whose particular Persuasions in Religion we are not well satisfied with) should enjoy some share of Advantage by this Revolution ; since it is not only what we vowed to God, and promised to them in our Adversity, but is that which cannot be denied them consistently with our own Safety.

Then for our Laws, they have recovered their just Vigour and Authority, great care being taken to provide excellent Judges and Magistrates
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for the execution of them ; and so our Lives, and all our Rights and Properties are as secure as can be expected under any humane Constitution : And to all this, We are under a Government so easie and gentle, that we have nothing to object, unless it be that it is so very benign, that it encourages some evil-natur'd Men to presume and to contemn it.

It is true, notwithstanding all this, that there are at present great Burdens and Taxes upon us ; but as they are no other than what are absolutely necessary for our Preservation, nor other than are voluntarily assented to by our selves, being no otherwise imposed than by our Representatives in Parliament ; so it is greatly to be hoped (by the Blessing of GOD) they will not continue long upon us. So that upon the whole, our present Condition is very tolerable *for a Wilderness*, and we have no cause to murmur, or to talk of returning back to *Egypt*. But,

Thirdly and Lastly, Let us (before we indulge our selves in a discontented, complaining Humour) forecast with our selves what are likely to be the effects and consequences of Murmuring; and they

they can be no better nor other than such as these following, *viz.*

First, Forasmuch as this Womanish Humour of Murmuring and Complaining, is both too weak in it self, and also comes too late to reverse the state of Affairs; it can effect nothing but Mischief to the Murmurers themselves. We are (GOD be thanked) so far out of *Egypt*, that some Mens Fancy and Humour will not be able to carry us back thither again. The King in possession is too sensible of his own Strength, and of the Hearts of his People, to be Murmured out of his Throne: The Nobility and Great Men are too far engaged to think of returning: The Body of the People have too quick a sense of the Liberty and Advantages they have under this Government, to be induced to fore-goe All for a Notion or a Complement, or to save the Longing of some sickly People.

So that this way will attain no End, mend no Matter, ease no Burden, discharge no Tax; but contrariwise, encrease and continue the Burthens of the Nation. Besides, that at this rate we are constant to nothing; unworthy of Deliverance; ingrateful to God and
Man;

Man ; false to our selves, and to our real Interest ; *Et quid frustra turpes esse volumus.*

Secondly, But suppose the Contagion of this Murmuring Humour should take through the Nation, (which God forbid,) why then, as Relapses are said to be more fatal than the Diseases themselves, so would our Condition be more miserable than ever. We shall then return to *Egypt* with a vengeance ; not only to the *Onions* and *Garlick*, (which perhaps we could fancy,) I mean, not only to the Idolatries and Superstitions and Follies, but to the *Brick-kilns* and *Iron Furnaces*, nay, to the *Plague of Lice* and *Caterpillars* ; to *Darkness* that may be felt ; to absolute Slavery of Body and Mind : In a word, to all the dismal effects of *French* Insolence, and *Papish* Revenge.

Nor will it help us, or make any discrimination in our case, to pretend, That we were the first that mention'd a Retreat, and that talk'd of going back again ; that we bogg'd at the Design, and were not thoroughly satisfied with the Revolution ? But why did you hearken to *Moses* at all ? Why did you break off your Fetters ? and wherefore did you

once look towards *Canaan* ? Thus we shall perish with shame and confusion to our selves, without pity from Spectators, and with scorn from our Enemies.

Thirdly, Nor will the Mischiefs end there neither ; but the Effects of it will reach over all the Protestant World, and destroy all the measures taken for the Preservation of that excellent Religion ; forasmuch as all of that Denomination, not only in *Ireland* and the *Low-Countries*, but *Germany*, *France*, &c. are embark'd in the same Bottom with us, and consequently must sink or swim as we do. All their Eyes are upon us ; next under God, they depend upon Us, as the principal Support of that Profession : If we fail them, they are all lost ; if we stand to it, they will take heart, and (by the Blessing of God) recover such Head, as probably never to be suppress'd again.

And now is the opportunity of making our utmost effort in Conjunction ; since we can never (without Miracles) hope for such an happy Juncture again, as now God hath presented us with, when all the Popish Princes are so deeply engaged in a War against *France*, and seem
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well contented that we should assert our own Interests, whilst in so doing, we assist them in humbling the Great *Leviathan*, who is otherwise ready to swallow up both.

Wherefore then, when such a Prize is put into our Hands, should we not have the Hearts to make use of it ? Why should we complain of little things, and take pet at Punctilio's, and soften our Spirits, and make feeble our Hands, by Murmuring and Repining ; and so abandon both our selves, our Brethren and Friends, in such an Opportunity ?

To all which add, in the Fourth and Last place, Let us consider the Example before us in the Text, and be really afraid (as there is great reason for it) lest (if we indulge this Murmuring Humour) G O D should resolve that none of us *shall enter into his Rest* ; I mean, that we shall never see those happy and glorious Times of Religion, which Good Men expect in these latter Days, according to the Predictions of Holy Scripture.

No question of it, *Antichrist* must down, and the true Spirit of the Gospel shall be advanced gloriously before the
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End of the World. This shall as certainly come to pass, as it was certain the Posterity of *Israel* should possess the Land of *Canaan*.

But if we, for our parts be Faint-hearted, and Peevish, and Unbelieving, God's Promise shall be accomplished, but we shall have no share nor comfort in it.

To conclude therefore, Let us stand stedfast in our Minds; *Rubiconem transistis*. You have left *Egypt*; meditate not a Revolt thither again: We are embark'd, and must go on or perish. Put on the Spirits of *English-men*, and the Zeal of *True Protestants*; stick not in the *Wilderness*, but resolve for *Canaan*.

Give me leave to press this upon you, as the Apostle doth on the *Corinthians*: in the First Epistle, chap. 10. he begins thus; *Brethren, I would not have you ignorant, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat: But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

And then, ver. 6. *Now these things were our examples, to the intent that we should*

should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted : neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them ; neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed ; neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted.

Again, ver. 10. *Neither let us murmur, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer.*

Lastly, ver. 11. *Now all these things hapned to them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

God give us all Hearts (in this our Day) to mind the Things of our Spiritual and Temporal Peace.

The End of the Sermons.

THE
Golden Rule :
OR, THE
ROYAL LAW
OF
EQUITY
EXPLAINED.

Οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἰκοῦν γινώσκοντες τὸ θεῖον.
Theophil. in Rom.

By JOHN GOODMAN, D.D.

L O N D O N,
Printed for Robert Clavel, 1697.

THE

ROYAL

ACADEMY

OF

SCIENCE

AND

ARTS

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Golden Rule :
 OR, THE
 ROYAL LAW
 OF
EQUITY
 EXPLAINED.

THERE never was any Law, Humane or Divine, nor any Principle of Common Reason and Philosophy, which hath been more universally received and acknowledged, than that Aphorism of our Saviours, which he delivers *Mat. 7. 12.* *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.* It hath been admir'd both by Jews and Gentiles, as well as Christians. Amongst the former, it was the cognizance of the greatest

est and most eminent Sect or Party of them, viz. the School of *Hillel*. Amongst the latter, it is well known that *Severus* (one of the best and wisest of the *Roman* Emperors) was so taken with it, that he not only had this Saying frequently in his Mouth, but caused it to be inscribed as his Motto upon his Banners. In a word, It is a Maxim subscribed to and owned by the Men of all Ages, Countries, Sects, Qualities and Conditions; for indeed (as we shall see anon) the Reason of it is as clear as the Light, the Date of it is as ancient as Mankind, and its Obligation as indissoluble as the very Frame of Nature.

Besides all this, it is evident at the first blush, that there neither is, nor ever was, any Precept of any Religion or Institution whatsoever, which was or could be more exactly calculated for the improving of the state of Mankind, or for the maintaining of Justice and Equity, Peace and Love in the World, than this is.

It may justly seem a Wonder therefore, how it should come to pass, that so little Fruit should grow from so pregnant a Root! And that when all Men so unanimously pretend to such a common

mon Principle of *Equity*, there should notwithstanding be so much Uneasiness, and so many Complaints in the World ; such Frauds and Injustice, Oppressions and Persecutions ; and such mutual Accusations and Recriminations. And to assail this Difficulty, one must of necessity either pass a very severe Censure upon a great part of Mankind, as acting inconsistently with themselves, and contradicting their avowed Principles by their Practices ; or else, on the other side, one must suppose, that as great a Party of Men as the former do not understand this Common Rule, or have not considered the Force and Obligation of it.

Now the latter of these being the more charitable Conjecture of the two, it will be the more allowable to lay the blame of the Miscarriage there : However, I will endeavour (as far as I am able) to apply a Remedy to both in this present Paper ; wherein my Design is, to give a brief and plain Exposition of this great Law of Nature, and of the Gospel. And although a Discourse of this nature may seem a little out of Fashion, and alien to the humour of the present Times ; yet (besides that I hope

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the Brevity may in some measure atone for the Unfashionableness) I am persuaded that (all things duly considered) there is hardly any thing else (which may be comprized in so little room) can be done more seasonably for the Age we live in, or whereby one can express more Good-will to all Mankind in general.

Therefore I will proceed in this Method :

- I. I will plainly lay open the genuine Meaning of this Rule.
- II. I will shew the Natural and Universal Equity of it.
- III. I will describe the just Bounds and Limits of its Obligation.
- IV. I will specify some of the Cases which it Over-rules and Determines.

And then, Lastly, for a Conclusion, I will represent the happy Effects and Advantages of Living and Acting accordingly.

I. For the Explication of this Rule.

Towards the understanding of this Aphorism, there is nothing more requisite to be supposed, than (that which cannot

cannot be doubted or denied, namely,) That there is such a Principle in us as *Self-Love*. And this (considered in it self) is not only innocent and allowable, but useful and necessary : For it is not the Issue of the Corruption and Depravation of our Nature, but implanted in us by our Creator for great and wise Purposes, partly to be a Guard and Preservative of our Beings, partly to sweeten our Lives to us, but principally to be the Foundation of all his Laws, or at least the great Engine by which He moves and governs us. For by this Handle of our *Self-Love* God Almighty takes hold of us ; by this Helm he turns us about agreeably to his own Designs : For it is evident, that if we had no Delight in our Selves, no Tenderness for our own Concerns, it would be to no effect to propound Laws to us, and to back them with the Threatnings and Promises of Rewards and Punishments ; and consequently it would be only in the Power of the Almighty to destroy us, (if he pleased,) but impossible to govern us.

Now that which is peculiar to the case in hand is this, That whereas in all other Instances of our Duty towards God, this

Principle of *Self-Love* is (as I said before) only an Hank upon us, or the Motive of our Obedience. Now here in this Law of *Loving our Neighbour*, it is not only the Motive, but the Rule and Measure also of our Duty. So that hereby we have a ready way to resolve our Selves of the Manner of our Carriage, and all our Actions towards others. For, GOD having made it our Duty in the general, to *Love our Neighbour as our self*; there is then no more to be done, but to turn our Eye inward, and consult that *Urim and Thummim* in our own Breasts, and we are presently instructed in all the Particulars of that Duty. Neither is there any need we should trouble our selves to consult *Books*, or *Philosophers*, or *Lawyers*, or *Casuits*, having a standing Oracle in our own Bosoms, which will as certainly determine us.

This is a Standard which can never fail us, till we desert or can hate our selves, which is impossible.

And it is a full and sufficient Standard too: For no Man will be niggardly toward himself; and if I give other Men the same Measure I use to my Self, there can be no cause of Complaint.

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And it is as easie and plain, and ready at hand, as it is full and certain : for it is but turning the *Tables*, and supposing my Case to be my Neighbours, or his to be mine, and my Way is plain before me. It is possible I may envy my Neighbour, and that may tempt me to give a wrong Judgment ; but then do but change the Scales, and put him in my place, and my self in his, and I cannot but be impartial : For though I have a Prejudice against Him, I have none against my Self. It is possible also, that my Neighbour may be greedy, and unreasonably desire of me more than is fit ; but to decide the Point, let me but put my self in his stead, and bethink my self what I should judge then equal for me to desire of him ; and so much and no more is due from me to him. Moreover, when Men are in Prosperity, there is nothing more common than for such to contemn and Brow-beat those that are in Adversity ; and on the other side, it is as ordinary for Men in Adversity to envy, and malign, and censure those in Prosperity. Now, to discover the Evil of both these, and withal to gain to our selves a Rule of our Carriage in either case, let the *Tables* be turned, and for

the present, suppose the Rich Man to be the Poor Man, and the Poor Man to become the Rich, and then we shall see what is fit on both sides. For most certainly, if this Rich Man was put in the Scale of the Poor, he would think it very hard to be despised meerly because he is Poor, and to have his Calamity imputed to him as his Crime, or his Folly ; but would think it Just (for all that difference of Condition) that he should be kindly and humanely treated in his Adversity. On the other side, put the Poor Man into the Rich Man's place, and he would assuredly think, that tho' a Man is not always the wiser or better Man for being Rich, yet there is some Respect due to his Place and Quality ; and he would not think he deserved to be called a Proud Man, meerly for keeping up his Port and Character : And thus both Parties judge right and speak truth in their own case, that could not discern it in another's. And thus we see the use of an appeal to this Principle of *Self-Love*, and that in so doing we have a *Chancery* and Court of Equity in our own Bosoms. And so we have the Meaning of this Rule, which was the First thing propounded.

2. *Now,*

2. *Now, Secondly, For the Equity and Natural Obligation of this Rule.*

This will appear upon a double account, *viz.* partly from the Actual Equality of Nature in all Men, and partly from the Possibility and Probability of Equality of Condition in all Men, one time or other.

First, It is naturally fit and reasonable that we should carry an Even-hand between our selves and other Men, *and love our neighbour as our self*, forasmuch as he is properly as our self, there being an Actual Equality of Nature in all Men : For whatsoever difference there may happen to be in Men's outward Circumstances, all that is but Accidental ; and when they are considered as divested of those Circumstances, they are all substantially alike. All have the same Creator, and stand in the same relation to God ; all Men's Bodies were made out of the same Earth, and (as it were) cast in the same Mold ; they are all born alike, and die alike : And for their Souls, they are equal too, all have the same Divine Image upon them, the same Faculties, and Reason is the same
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throughout the World. Consequently of this they are all common Citizens of the World, and (as to Nature) have an equal share in it. Now, *Æqualibus æqualia tribuere*, to deal alike between those that are equal in themselves, is a first Principle of Reason in all Mankind ; and therefore to deal by our Neighbour as we would be dealt by our Selves, is an universal and indispensable Law of Justice.

Secondly, There is a possibility, if not a probability of the Equality of all Men's Conditions and Circumstances one time or other ; he that is now Rich may be Poor, and he that is Poor may become Rich ; the Man of Dignity and Power may be depress'd, and the mean Man may be exalted : And such changes are so frequent, that he must be prodigiously vain and stupid, that doth not apprehend it may be his own case at one time or other ; and if he be apprehensive of such a vicissitude of things, he will have all the reason in the world to provide for it accordingly ; that is, if he now be on the Advantage ground, he will yet be humble and modest and merciful towards his Inferiors, and those in Adversity : And if he be now at the bottom,
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he will hope his Condition may mend, and in the mean time think such thoughts of those above him, as he would be willing should be entertained concerning himself when the tide is turn'd. And he that doth not so, is neither Just for the present, nor Provident for the future ; for he hath no certain measure of his Actions, but goes by a Rule now, which he would be loth to stand to at another time. And so much for that : I proceed to shew,

3. Thirdly, *The Just Bounds and Limits of this Axiom.*

However easie and expedite this Rule may seem to be (by what we have hitherto said,) yet it is notoriously certain, that there are very great and frequent Mistakes in the Application of it, whilst some take it in so large a sense, as to supersede all other Laws, both Humane and Divine, by it ; and others as much restraining and straitning the scope of it, make it indeed no Rule at all, but a bare Saying, to serve a turn by now and then. Therefore I think it necessary, before I proceed in the Deduction of Practical Consequences from this Axiom, to lay down the following

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Particulars, for the more full Explication of it. And,

First, It is to be considered, That this Rule or Aphorism before us, is only intended for the Government of our Actions towards Men, not for a Measure of Religion (properly so called) or of our Carriage towards God. For he being Infinite in all Perfections, there is nothing in us that we can appeal to as a Measure of what is due towards Him. Neither is it enough for us to love God as we love our selves; for He being Infinitely better than our selves, it is consequently our Duty to love him better than we love our selves, namely, with all our Heart, and Soul, and Strength; and if more than that was possible to be performed by us, it would be due to Him accordingly. But now it is sufficient that I love my Neighbour as my self, because (as I have shewed) he is like my self, or a kind of second self; and it would be a kind of Injustice to love him better than my self, because then I do not *æqualibus æqualia tribuere*. And consequently I cannot be naturally bound to die for my Neighbour, because this supposes that I ought to love him better than my self. But, on the other side,
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I am bound (if occasion be, and when God's Honour requires it) to die for God, because he is infinitely better than my self, and therefore is to be preferr'd before my Life, or whatsoever else is dearest to me.

This, I think, is plain enough, and needed not to have been said here, but for the sake of some conceited Moralists (as they love to be called) who shrink up all Religion into this one Precept, of *doing as they would be done unto*; as if this was not only the whole Decalogue, but their Creed and *Pater Noster* too. And for countenance of this absurd Persuasion, they insist upon those words which our Saviour adds as an Encomium of the Maxim aforesaid, *For this is the Law and the Prophets*, as if this one Saying comprehended the whole Doctrine of the old and New Testament.

But it is very plain, that those latter words of our Saviour ought not nor can be so loosely understood; for to imagine him to assert, that this one great Maxim exprest the whole Duty of Man, is to suppose him to make void all Divine Revelation, and to take away all necessity either of Old or New Testament, forasmuch as this Rule is clear enough
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of it self by the meer Light of Nature, and accordingly hath been acknowledg'd by those that never had any other Light to guide them, (as we have intimated already.)

Besides, Man is not our only Correlative; but we stand in Relation to a God that made us, as well as to Man that is made like us, and therefore the greatest and highest part of our Duty results from that higher Relation, and those greater Obligations we have upon us towards God, than towards one another. In Contemplation of which, a Heathen could say, *Quid aliud est Pietas quam Justitia adversus Deos*; That Piety is Justice; and that neglect of Religious Observance of the Divine Majesty is as manifest Injustice towards him, as any instance of Fraud or Violence towards our Neighbour can amount unto.

The meaning therefore of our Saviour in those additional words, *This is the Law and the Prophets*, can be no more but this, *viz.* That the Rule aforesaid is the sum of the Second Table of the Law, and of the Expositions and Paraphrases of the Prophets upon it. For accordingly we observe in a parallel place, *Mat. 22. 36.* when a Lawyer asks this
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Question, *Master*, which is the great Commandment of the Law? Our Saviour answers, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; this is the first and great Commandment: And the second is like unto it, namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self:* And then adds, *On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.* Where we see, beyond all dispute, that the whole Model of our Duty, nor the entire Design of the Law and Prophets, is not comprized in one of these Rules, but in both together.

Secondly, It is further considerable, That even in relation to our Neighbour, and in the conduct and government of our Actions towards Men, this Maxim is rather to be looked upon as a Measure than a Law properly so called: My meaning is, That the Use of it is rather to prescribe to us how much we should do, than what we should do; or as that which rather determines the Proportion of our Actions, than justifies the Matter of them. To speak more plainly yet, (if it be possible,) I say, this Rule is intended principally to direct us what Measures we are to take, and what Proportion to observe, in the Discharge
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of such an Action towards our Neighbour, where and when the Action or Thing it self in the general is already known to be certainly lawful ; not for a Law properly to warrant the thing we are about, whatsoever it is. For if it was otherwise, a common Drunkard might justifie his endeavour of debauching other Men into that beastly Vice, under this pretence, That he doth nothing in that case, but what he is content should be done to himself. And the Lascivious Person, so he might be allowed to defile his Neighbour's Bed, would perhaps be content another should do as much for him. And no question but a dexterous Cheat would allow others to cheat him if they could, provided he might exercise his Talent that way without controul.

Therefore (as I said) this Axiom doth not privilege evil Actions, no, nor so much as determine any Action to be good, meerly upon the reciprocal Inclination of Mens Minds. For this were at once to repeal all the Laws of God and Man ; and under pretence of making every Man a Law to himself, to make him absolutely lawless : But it only prescribes the Measure
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of our Actions in *materiâ licita & honesta*.

For *Example* : Suppose I am in deliberation with my self, how I ought to carry my self towards my poor Brother in his Adversity, and what Relief I am bound to give him, or how far I ought to strain my self in his case. Here now I am certain, that the thing I deliberate about, is lawful and good in the general ; and then this Rule comes seasonably in for my direction in the measure of my Performance ; *viz.* It tells me, that I am to deal by that poor Man, just as I would be dealt with by him, if his case were mine, and mine were his. But now, on the other side, Suppose the thing I am deliberating about, be the retaliating of an Injury, or the revenging my self upon him that hath done me wrong : Here now I must first see a Law justifying me in revenging my self, before I can resolve my self of the Measure of Revenge which I am to take. For it will not be a sufficient warrant to me, that I intend to proceed equitably, or that I would do by that Man only just as in like case I would be content to be done unto. But I must first be sure that it is lawful for me to revenge my self, and that

that I do not break another Law, usurping God's Prerogative, who hath told us, *Vengeance is his.*

Thirdly, Moreover, if this Business be well considered, we shall find that this Maxim is not absolutely a Rule *in materiâ licita & honesta* neither, but only in *re debitâ*. My meaning is, That to apply this Maxim to its peculiar use and intent, we must not only be satisfied antecedently, that the Matter of the Action we are about, be in it self lawful, (without which, we have seen already, that *to do as we would be done by*, will not bear us out,) but it is also required, that that very Measure of that Thing or Action which this Rule obliges me to observe towards my Neighbour, be such as I should think was due and of right belonging to me, if the case was mine, as it is now another Man's. For I am not bound to do to another all that which it is lawful for him to do to me, no, nor all that which I could wish he should do to me. Nor, on the other side, am I bound to refrain from doing to him, that which I could heartily wish he should refrain from doing to me: But my Obligation from this Rule principally lies in this, That I both do, or refrain

refrain from doing (respectively) towards him, all that which (turning the Tables, and then consulting my own Heart and Conscience) I should think that Neighbour of mine *bound* to do, or to refrain from doing towards me in the like case.

As for *Example* : If I was in extreme Poverty, when my Neighbour was in as great Affluence and Prosperity, no doubt but I should be easily tempted to wish that he, out of his Abundance, should not only relieve my present and urgent Necessity, or supply me from Hand to Mouth (as we say,) but also that he should pour out his Surplusage upon me, and once for all, by a great Effort of Charity, put me quite out of my distressed Condition. This, I say, I could wish in my own case ; and there is no doubt but that it is in it self lawful for such a Rich Man as aforesaid so to do, if he pleases ; yet, for all this, I cannot think him bound so to do, or that he sins if he doth not so : For I cannot find, that (if the Tables were turn'd) I should think it to be a sin in my self not to do so by him ; and therefore it cannot be a Duty in him to do so by me.

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Again, It may be I could wish that some Laws of the Land were more accommodate to my convenience, and it is possible the Law-maker might have contrived things more for my convenience, without any sin or fault on his part ; yet so long as those Laws are just in themselves, and suited to the Publick Good, I cannot think it the Duty of the Supreme Magistrate so far to consult my particular Interest ; for (turning the Tables) I should not have thought it to have been my own Duty in such a case, therefore I ought in that case not to complain, but in all reason to submit my private Interest to that of the Publick.

I will give one *Example* more, (because this Point is a little obscure and difficult to be rightly explained otherwise than by Instances.) It is certain, that any Man would be loth to be put to death as a Malefactor, whatever the Case or his Demerit shall be : And I think I may take it for granted, that there are several cases wherein the Prince or Supreme Magistrate may pardon, if he please, though the Malefactor justly deserve Death. Now sure it would be very absurd to conclude from hence, that

that therefore he ought to pardon me in such a case, or to say that he is cruel in putting me to death, which I have otherwise deserved. For though I could wish for a Pardon, and he hath it in his power to give it me, yet it will not follow that he sins if he do not ; for my own Heart doth not tell me that I was *bound* to do so in the like case ; and therefore if I make the same Measure serve for both Parties, I cannot (according to the Rule before us) pronounce that he *ought* to do so.

Not therefore whatsoever I could honestly enough wish for at the hands of my Neighbour, nor every thing that it is lawful for him to do, is necessary to be done to me ; but only that which I can reasonably judge (turning the Tables, that so I may be impartial) to be the Duty of my Neighbour towards me, and that because I should think it to be my Duty towards him in the like case, that is to be the Measure of my Expectations from him ; and I may justly challenge that, and no more from him, upon this Rule of Equity.

Thus much hath been said hitherto, to prevent the straining of this Rule beyond the true reason and intent of it.

Now, to provide against the like Mistakes on the other hand, and to give, it its true Scope and Latitude, I add two Particulars more, *viz.*

Fourthly then, It is to be considered, That as all Men are equal in Nature, (as we shewed before,) and consequently whatsoever treatment is due to one Man, must be so to another; therefore this same Rule is to govern all Men in all their Actions and Intercourse one with another, without partiality or respect of Persons, of what Condition or Quality soever they be. For this is a Rule, not an Advice only; not a thing which we may do well to observe, but matter of Law and Duty upon all Men. And therefore the *Prince* is obliged by it, as well as Private Men: For this being founded in primary Nature, is antecedent to all the several Ranks and Distinctions of Men. *It is* a Rule between Men of several Countries and Dominions, as well as between Neighbours; for our Saviour hath shewed us, that all Mankind are to be esteemed our Neighbours. *It is* to be observed between Men of several Religions, as well as those that are of the same way of Worship; nay, the same equitable Carriage is due to

to the Men of the most abject and senseless Opinions, as to those of the truest and most excellent Profession ; for Mens Weakness and Folly (or whatever we impute their Errors to) destroys not their Natural Right to an Equitable Usage.

*It is true, amongst the People of the Jews, there was an Exception in this case, and they were not bound to do to all Men as they would be done unto ; for God (by a peculiar Dispensation) having condemned the Seven Nations to utter Destruction, had exempted them from the common Privileges of Mankind : And besides, his Divine Wisdom (having a design to separate the People of the Jews from all Nations of the Earth) not only instituted peculiar Rites for the distinction of this People from all others, but also (in pursuance of that end) allowed and required they should in some respect treat all other People as Strangers. But when our Saviour came, that *Wall of Partition was pulled down*, and all the World were made one People ; and from that time especially this Rule of Universal Equity takes place without exception. And now no Man can be so inconsiderable,*

or of so despicable a condition, but he hath an Interest in the Common Charity of Christians: No Man so remote from us in his Country or Habitation, or so different from us in Opinion, or so silly in his Understanding, or so vicious in his Manners, or so ill temper'd for his Nature, but there is a common Tie of Equity between us and him, which no miscarriage of his can forfeit, nor any Power on Earth can dispense with. And therefore those that now confine Equity and Justice and Charity to a Party that imagine they can do no wrong to a Dissenter, that fancy no Faith is to be kept with Hereticks, or the like, they revive the very Dregs of Judaism, and utterly destroy the great Design of Christianity, whilst they are ignorantly zealous of their own Opinions.

Fifthly and Lastly, It is to be observed, That this passage of our Saviour's was not intended so much to be a Rule of Retribution or Requital, as of Kindness and primary Obligation. For it is not said, *Do to other Men as they do or have done to you*; but, *as ye would they should do to you*: That is, as if our Saviour had said, I would have my Disciples so prompt
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and so enclined to good Offices towards each other, that I would not have them stay till an Obligation is laid upon them, and that then they should requite it with the like : But I would have Christians anticipate, begin, and be an Example of Kindness to one another, or to make Precedents and Instances of Beneficence where they find none, and so bring the World to be better natur'd. In a word, *To do that to others, in the first place, which they would be glad to receive from others in the second place.* This (I take it) is to interpret this Rule properly in an Evangelical sense ; for this is the peculiar Spirit of the Gospel, to oblige the Professors of it to be the *Salt of the Earth*, the *Light of the World*, and the first Movers in every good thing. And to that purpose, it requires *we should love our enemies, do good to them that hate us and persecute us. Not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good ; i. e.* by Kindness and Beneficence to melt Men into good Nature : Which, I think, is the meaning of that phrase of the Apostle, who tells us, by so doing, *we shall heap coals of fire on their heads.*

It is a brutish thing to think our selves licensed to do Evil to others, because

they have done so to us. It is a Pharisical thing to do Good only in proportion to what is done to us; and it is a selfish stingy thing to do it upon that Motive, and in expectation that it may be so done to us; but the temper of a Christian is to do Good without Invitation or Provocation, from the meer Bignity of his Nature, and out of meer Love of Beneficence; and then for the proportion of that Beneficence, that is to be so great, as what we would gladly meet with from others, if the case was alter'd.

4. *I come now, as the Fourth part of this short Discourse, to specify some of the principal Cases which this Axiom (so interpreted as aforesaid) will over-rule and determine, and consequently to shew of what great Influence it will be upon Humane Affairs, if it be applied accordingly.*

And indeed, the Use of this Rule is so general, and the Occasions of having recourse to it are so frequent, that Experience only can most effectually shew the Importance of it. However, since I am obliged to instance in some Particulars,

culars, I will specify these following (as they come to my thoughts) without being over-careful of the Order in which I set them down.

First, The attending to this one Rule before us, would in a great measure prevent the Wars and Bloodshed that are in the World, and therewithal would hinder that Cruelty and Rapine, those Desolations of Countries, and Convulsions of Kingdoms, which are not more the Infelicities, than the Shame and Reproach of Mankind; and which almost as much take away the distinction between Man and Beast, as they destroy the Blessings and Comfort of Humane Life.

I know the common Pretence for War, is, That between Sovereign Princes and States there are no Common Tribunals to decide the Controversies, and therefore it is said there is a necessity of appealing to the great Sovereign of the World, *the Lord of Hosts*. But is there no such thing as a Court of Conscience, or Common Equity? Is there no Common Law of Reason? Are there no General Bonds of Humane Society? Is there no such Universal Rule, as to *do as we would be done by*?

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If there be none, then the Sword may Ravage the World, *Jusque datum sceleri*, and the greatest Force hath the best Cause. But if there be (as we have shewn there is,) then the Consideration of it, and Application to it, might end Disputes without the Umpirage of the Sword; for then Princes will be concerned in it as well as Subjects; forasmuch as when they put on the Diadem, they do not put off the Men. And then it will not seem warrantable to involve whole Nations in Blood, upon a Puntilio of Honour, or for the Glory of their own Name, or for Encrease of Territory; or, in a word, for what they can get. It will not then seem lawful to Invade another's Dominions, because that Prince is weak and unprovided; or to take advantage of Intestine Divisions, or the Minority of the Prince, or the Corruption of his Ministers, or other Difficulties he labours under. For whosoever looks home, will readily acknowledge, that he would not be so dealt with himself, and therefore ought to use the same Measure towards others. For (though *Inter arma silent Leges*, yet) the Court of Conscience is always open, Equity hath no Non-Term; written
Laws

Laws may be interrupted, but this *Lex non scripta sed nata* is always of force.

It is said, the *Turks*, before they engage in a War, are wont to consult their Great *Musti*, or *High-Priest*, about the Lawfulness of the Enterprize. And the *Pagans* of old used solemnly to advise with their Oracles in such cases. And even amongst *Christians*, a Consecrated Sword, or an Hallowed Banner from the Chief Pontiff, uses to encourage the Expedition. But without that Ceremony and Pomp, here is an Oracle in our own Breast, which if Men would consult ingenuously, it would for the most part dissuade the War; or if it did not, it would marvellously tend to succeed the Prosecution. It would (I say) ordinarily be like to *Socrates's Genius* or *Good Angel*, which was observed by himself generally to caution and restrain him, but seldom or never to prompt or inflame him. Which, I remember, *Tully* saith is no more than the constant *Genius* of every wise Man.

And if it shall happen that Wars be undertaken without asking the Counsel of this Oracle, (as too commonly they are) and withal be successful too, (which frequently they are not,) yet the Injustice
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will blemish the Glory of the Victory. For even amongst the *Romans*, nothing more frequent in their own Histories, than to lay a Blot upon such Achievements. So *Florus* leaves upon Record, *Cretici Belli nullam aliam fuisse causam, quam Nobilis Insulæ acquirendæ cupiditatem*: It was Covetousness, and not Justice, that moved that War. And to the same purpose, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, speaking of the Enterprize upon *Cyprus*, saith, *Cyprum insulam avidè magis, quam juste populum Romanum invasisse*. And to name no more, *Petronius Arbiter* hath blasted almost all the Glory of the *Roman Arms*, in these few words,

— *Si quis finus abditus ultrà,
Si qua foret Tellus quæ fulvum mitteret
aurum,
Hostis erat, &c.*

So that it seems, even amongst that grasping and warlike Nation, there was an apprehension of the Obligation of Equity and Justice towards other People, and that they did not think that every thing was lawful to him that had the longest Sword. And therefore though this apprehension was not always sufficient to restrain their Covetousness and
Ambi-

Ambition, yet it ought to have done, and shamed them when it did not.

But, *Secondly*, If Princes and great States be not to be restrained by this Law, and Force must be the *Ratio ultima Regum*; yet sure, amongst private Persons it may be attended to, and be of Authority enough to suppress Duels, and *the shedding of the Blood of War in Peace*, as the Scripture calls it: which is the most Salvage and Belluine Custom that can be imagin'd, and so much worse than War it self, in that that hath some excuse, (as I intimated before,) *viz.* because between Sovereign Princes there is no Superior Court to Appeal to for Justice; whereas in this Case there is a Remedy in Humane Judicatures: but especially it is intolerable, that the Life of my Neighbour, and my own too, should be put upon the Point of the Sword, on the slightest Provocations, for a contumelious Expression which a Wise Man would despise; nay, it may be, for a meer rash Word, or a Jest, which a Great-minded Man would not think worth his Animadversion. Now, if Men consulted their own Reason or Conscience, or any thing but meerly their Brutish Passion, in such cases, would

would they not make Allowance for such Follies and Inadvertencies in others ? since they are not exempted from them themselves : Would they be contented to answer with their Lives for every Indiscretion they have been guilty of ? If they can be so content, they are unworthy of Life who value it at so mean a rate : If they cannot, they confess themselves to proceed unjustly. But above all, why should not a Man, in such a Case, take his Measures from the Fifth Particular in the Explication of this Rule, and take a Christian and a Noble Revenge indeed ? that is, Why should he not forgive the Injury, and so be above his Adversary ? The other way, at best, I put my self but upon the Level with him ; but here I place my self above him, and triumph over him. Why should I not oblige him by Kindness, and *heap coals of fire on his head*, and rather, like a Brave Christian, do that which I wish he had done to me, than, like a Beast, hurt him because he hath hurt me ?

Thirdly, The Application of this Rule to our Practices, would tend very much to the prevention of another evil, not much inferior to either of the former, namely,

namely, Law-Suits, which in truth are but another kind of War, and are usually managed with as much Malice and Rancour as War it self. Certainly they are a great Reproach to Christendom, and to this Nation in particular. It is an unhappy Observation (of some body) *That what the Moors spend at the Jollities of their Weddings, the Jews at the Solemnity of their Passover, that and more the Christians expend in Law-Suits.* And it is verily thought that the whole Expence of Law in *England*, is equal to the Charge of a Foreign War. But it is not only the Expence of Money that is deplorable in this case, but the imbroiling Mens Spirits, the inflaming their Passions, the hindrance and scandal to Religion, and the intailing of Quarrels upon Posterity. Now, if these things were fatally necessary and unavoidable, it were in vain to complain and aggravate the matter; but there is a Remedy at hand, if we would make use of it: Time hath been when it was otherwise, and therefore it may be so again. *What, (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 6. 5.) is there not a wise man amongst you? no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?* But especially, Is there no such

such thing as Conscience of Equity ? Have we not a Judge within us ? Is not this Law before us sufficient to determine our Quarrels ? Let but the Plaintiff put himself in the case of the Defendant, and the Defendant suppose himself in the place of the Plaintiff, and both shall easily see what is fit to be done, and Matters will be amicably composed.

Fourthly, The Observation of this Rule would as well advance the Interest and Reputation of the Christian Church, as the Quiet of the World ; for it would at once both prevent most of those Severities that Christians too frequently use one towards another upon the account of Religion, and also put a stop to the Clamours upon that occasion. It is undeniably true, that very hard things have been done upon the score of Propagating or Preserving the Truth and Purity of Religion : And it is as true, that very great Noises and Complaints have been made of Persecution, when perhaps there hath been no just cause for it. And there is hardly to be found any great Party of Men that can clearly wash their Hands of both these Miscarriages, and few that can quit themselves of either of them : For it hath
too

too ordinarily happen'd, that the same Persons who have at one time been too unchristianly harsh towards others, have at another time been as blameably too tender and sensible when the Tide hath been turn'd, and it is become their own case ; forgetting, in the former Instance, to do as they would be done unto ; and not considering, in the other Instance, that if what they did before was Just towards others, it ought not to be matter of Complaint when it comes home to themselves.

There is no doubt but there is a vast difference between these two things, and that it is far better to complain unjustly, than to do cruelly ; yet neither are to be excused : For as by the former, *viz.* Exclaiming of Persecution without just ground, not only a general Odium is kindled against those that out of Zeal pursue those severe Methods, but oftentimes the State and Civil Government is endanger'd by the Flames kindled thereupon : So, by the latter, (I mean, Persecution properly so call'd,) Religion it self is made odious, and loses its principal Glory of being Rational, and commending it self by its own Light ; and Men are tempted to suspect, that to be
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destitute of good Proof, which needs to be supported by Force, and (so like Colours in the dark) all Religions are alike, when the use of Reason is laid aside, and Force supplies the room of it. And consequently, all Study, and ingenious ways of Improving Mens Minds are superseded ; for where it is become the fashion to knock Men on the Head that will not be converted, it will not seem worth the while to take the pains to convince them. And, in short, the very temper of Religion it self will in time be supplanted, and only a dull sottish compliance upon Implicit Faith, and a formal Hypocrisie succeed in the room of it.

But now (as I said) both these Mischiefs may be avoided, by a due Application of the Maxim before us : For, on the one side, as for those blind Zealots that are always most fierce and forward in Persecution, though they have little or no Conscience, yet they cannot be without this Principle of *Self-Love* ; and though they have not Judgment to discern the difference of Things, yet they may turn the Tables, and change the Scale, and see how things look on both sides.

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As for *Example* : I wou'd fain have another Man be of my Opinion, yet sure it will not look well to knock him on the Head if he be not : For (turning the Tables) I find that I would not be so dealt with in the like case ; especially seeing he is a Man, and I am no more, and consequently I am no more infallible than he is ; and therefore he hath as much right to persecute me into his opinion, as I have to force him into mine.

Or, Suppose I would be glad that the Way I am of should be encouraged, and the contrary discouraged : but however, it will not be fit to starve all those that dissent from it ; for I should think it great cruelty to be so dealt with my self.

But, it may be, the Way I am of, is that which hath Publick Allowance, and is reputed the most Orthodox ; yet if I look into my self, I find that I cannot be of what Opinion I will : And if it was my fortune to be Heterodox, I should think it hard to be rackt up to the Publick Standard ; therefore such Usage cannot be equal towards other Man.

But perhaps some Man will say, Are then all Opinions alike ? Is there no

'Advantage to be given to Truth above Error ? Is not the one to be propagated with all our might, and the other to be as carefully suppress'd ? I answer, Yes doubtless, there is a very different treatment due to Truth than to Error, provided we be sure which is which. For otherwise, one Man is apt to be as confident of his Persuasion, as another Man can be of his ; therefore it is fit that Infallible Wisdom should determine between them, and that can be no otherwise done, than by the plain and express Letter of Holy Scripture. Without this Umpirage we may indulge our own Fancies and Passions under a Notion of Zeal of God and Truth. But if there be plain and express Scripture in the case, then (though it always becomes a Christian to encline to the side of Tenderneſs and Mercy, yet) for my part (till I am better informed) I shall not call it Persecution, to make a great difference in the Countenance and Encouragement I give to that which is so warranted. And if this was not true, then it would follow, that whensoever I meet with any Severities made use of in the Holy Scripture in the case of Religion (of which we have frequent Instances

stances in the Old Testament especially,) I must call that also a Culpable Persecution : which I am sure I ought not to do. But if it come to this point, and all Persecution be stopt, but where the Truth is defined expressly by God himself, the first Mischief is cured (for ought I know) as far as it ought to be.

On the other side : As for those querulous Persons who are apt to complain before they are hurt, and to scandalize the Laws, and reflect on their Governors, under the Notion of Persecution, their Noise would be still'd, if they attended to this Rule of Equity, and doing as they would be done to. It is true, I would have my Conscience to my self, and think it horribly tyrannical, that any body should impose upon me to believe as he pleases. But, on the other side, if I must have my own Opinion, must I have my Will too ? Must I be Uppermost in the State, and be put in Power and Authority equal with other Men, or else I am Persecuted ? Nay, must I not only enjoy my own Conscience, but affront other Mens, or else I am rigorously dealt with ? Must I have liberty to scorn and blaspheme another Religion, or else I am not suffer'd comfortably to

enjoy my own? In a word, Is my Birth-right violated, and my Natural Liberty of chusing my own Religion infringed, if the Publick Religion of the Country, and that which is established by the Laws, be encouraged by the Advantages of Publick Maintenance? Surely these are very extravagant Collections, and any Man that turns the Tables will easily discern them to be so, and to contain more of Humour than Conscience; for whatsoever Allowance I ought to make in favour of Liberty and Conscience, yet reflecting upon my self impartially, I am certain, that if my Religion was the Publick Establishment, I should think somewhat the more respect due to it upon that account; and if I was then in Authority (though, I would deprive no Man of his Natural Rights, for not complying with the Publick Opinion, yet) I would be sure to encourage and prefer those that thought and professed as I did; nay, it may be, I should proceed so far, as to put some Mark of Distinction upon those that did not so. And I should be so far from pulling down those Fences or Out-works which the Wisdom of my Ancestors had provided for the Security of that Religion

gion which I was persuaded was the Truth, that I would not stick to restrain (by some fit Punishments) those insolent People who could not be content with their own Liberty, without affronting mine and the establish'd Religion. And all this I should not doubt to do, without incurring the odious Name of a *Persecutor*. And therefore, since I should think it lawful to do all this, were the case my own, *viz.* That I was on the advantage ground, and had the Laws on my side; I cannot with any colour of Reason complain, if thus much, and no more, be done to me, when I am on the wrong side of the hedge, and maintain only a private and disallowed Opinion.

Again, *Fifthly*, The framing of our selves by this Rule of *doing as we would be done unto*, would produce another Temper and Spirit than is commonly seen in the Age we live in, especially in the managing of Disputes and Controversies in Religion, whether by way of private Conference, or publick Writings. The Heats and Passions, the Taunts and Scorns, and Contumelious Treatments of one another in these Affairs, are scandalous to a Proverb, *Odium Theologorum*.

Men not only fill up the void Places or Intervals of their Discourses with Reproaches, but blot both sides of their Paper with such filthy stuff.

Now, I will not only say, that this Carriage is utterly unbecoming Christianity, which requires and produces (where-ever it prevails effectually) the most Mild, Innocent and Dove-like Temper. Nor will I say only, that this kind of Management is most peculiarly undecent in so grave and solemn an Affair as Religion is: But that which I would say, is, That whosoever consults his own Breast, would never be guilty of this fault towards any sort of Men; since he will find there, that he would not be dealt with so himself. I know my Adversary thinks otherwise than I do; but why may not he think, as well as I? or, how far do I differ from him, more than he doth from me? I am content therefore he should urge me with his Reasons, because I would do so by him: But instead of hard Arguments, I would not have him pelt me with hard Words; and therefore I ought not to do so by him. Let him stick upon the Merits of the Cause, but not blemish my Person or Reputation. I take it to be a sign a
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Man is destitute of good Proofs, when *furor arma ministrat*, and when Passion supplies the place of Reason; and if it be so in another, it is no better in me. I will not therefore make use of contemptuous Reflections, sly Insinuations, malicious Inuendo's, witty Sarcasms against him, because I think it both absurd and unjust that he should do so against me. And besides, I consider, that if my Cause be good, i shall not need to resort to such Artifices; and if it be bad, this course will not mend it, but rather make my Temper appear as bad as my Cause.

But that which I peculiarly aim at in this place, is, (if it were possible) to repress the odious Imputation of Heresie to one another, in Disputations, which yet is the usual Complement that passes in such Cases. I remember it was the Saying of St. Jerom, *In crimine Hæreses neminem volo esse patientem*: He look'd upon the Charge of Heresie to be so horrid and deadly a Stab, that it would tempt the Patience of a Saint. Now, if no Man can, or (as the holy Man thought) ought to bear it; for the same reason, and much more, no Man ought so liberally to bestow it, as is com-

commonly done. Besides that, Heresie, in the very Notion of it, implies Contumacy, and Subbornness added to Error; and if any Man can find in his heart to upbraid another with his Errors (which may be involuntary) yet it is sure hard to know his Heart, so as to pronounce peremptorily that he is Self-condemned, and sins against his own Conscience. At least, I would think it very disingenuous for any Man to judge so of me, and therefore I ought not rashly to pronounce so of him.

Moreover, *Sixthly*, The Practice of this way of Reflection, and taking an estimate of other Men by our selves, would prevent Heart-burnings, Jealousies and Suspicions, which are the Seed-plot of most of the Mischiefs amongst Mankind, and the very Bane of Human Society: For it is but looking inward, and I find that I think it just, that a fair and candid Interpretation be made of my Actions; I conceive my self to be ill dealt with, if I be thought to intend contrary to my Pretensions; nay, if there be any thing dark and doubtful in the case, I expect so much Charity from Men, as that they think
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the best that can be made of it, till the Truth appears.

Therefore, if I will be true to my own Principles, and impartial towards others, it is manifest that after this manner I should interpret other Mens Thoughts and Actions : Not judge the Tree to be bad, when I see the Fruit good : Not censure a Man for an Hypocrite, meerly because he looks like a Saint : Not pronounce of Men's Hearts in a direct contrariety to their Words and Actions. In a word, Not to subvert all the Foundations of Friendship, and to poison Society by ill Surmizes.

Upon this occasion I remember a remarkable Case between the Pagans and the Primitive Christians. It was the Custom of those good Men to hold their Assemblies for Religion very privately, and for the most part by Night ; upon this occasion there was a Jealousie raised amongst the Pagans, that something or other was done in those Nocturnal Meetings which would not endure the Light ; and in a little while, this Suspicion was improved into a common Fame, That these Christians, in those Clandestine Assemblies, were wont to murder

murder an innocent Infant, and then to eat his Flesh and drink his Blood amongst them, as the Solemn Rite of their Confederation in that Religion. Now this groundless Scandal those Primitive Christians quit themselves of, by appealing to the Common Sense of Humane Nature, and this Rule of Equity which we are all this while considering; and in their Apologies, make use of this Dilemma; *Could you Pagans find in your hearts to perpetrate so horrid a Villany, under the pretence of Religion, as you accuse us of? If you could, you condemn your selves of Barbarism and Cruelty beyond the rate of Mankind: But if ye could not, then you are as extremely unjust, in suspecting us (without ground) of being guilty of that which is so abhorrent to Humane Nature.*

But there is one thing more I would have considered under this Head; namely, Whether the attending to this Rule would not prevent Sedition in the State, as well as evil Thoughts amongst private Persons? It is certain, all Tumults and Rebellions begin in Jealousies of the Designs of Governors, and thence proceed to Insolencies and contemptuous Carriage towards the Government it self; and then

then when Men are engaged so far, they stick at nothing which may tend to the Ruine and Subversion of that which they have both already condemned in their Thoughts, and render'd themselves obnoxious to. Now, would such Men be so ingenuous, as, in the first place, to make Allowance for such Humane Infirmities in Magistrates, as (consulting their own Bosoms) they must needs acknowledge themselves not to be exempted from; and be so candid, as to think no worse of other Men's Designs (till the contrary appears) than they would have thought of their own: And then especially would they (as I have often said) turn the Tables, and suppose themselves for a while in the Place of their Governors, they would then easily conclude, that it was not ingenuous to make cross-grain'd and perverse Interpretations of all dark and doubtful Passages. Forasmuch as every Man of any Sence knows, that if he was in Publick Authority, he should and must do several things, upon the Interest of Government, which he ought not presently to make every body privy to the Reasons of, and yet he would think it unjust to be malapertly censured
for

for them. And the same Man (be he who he will) in those Circumstances, would not allow that every private Capricio and perverse Fancy should confront publick Order; but would expect, that whilst he sustain'd that part, some Veneration should be used towards his Person, for the sake of the Character he bears, and that Obedience be yielded to all his (not unlawful) Injunctions. And therefore, by the Rule of Equity, every such Person is bound, being a private Man, to carry himself with the like regard towards those that are his Superiors. And thus (as I said) the Seeds of Sedition and Rebellion would be nipt in the Bud.

Again, *Seventhly*, The due Consideration of this Maxim would cure that ill-natur'd Humour of rubbing up old Sores, and upbraiding one another with former Follies and Miscarriages: A Custom it is equally rife and mischievous, and I know not whether more uncharitable or imprudent, whether more fatally obstructing the Reformation of others, or more improvidently rebounding upon those that practise it.

It is, in the first place, very disingenuous to reproach Men for those Follies they have out-grown, and to upbraid them with those Sins they have repented of and forsaken. It is hard, that no Time nor Merit should efface Humane Miscarriages ! That mortal and sinful Men should never forgive one another, who every day need forgiveness of God Almighty ! That Men should find pleasure to rake in the Wounds of their Brethren ! *And it is* that which almost invincibly tempts Men to continue evil, when they are brought to despair of ever being believed to be good : For what Engine hath either God or Man ever found out to mend the state of the World, other than that of Hope, the force of which is everlastingly defeated by this malicious treatment of rubbing the old Sore, and keeping it perpetually bleeding ; when Sorrow shall not be allowed to cover Men's Shame, nor Repentance be sufficient to draw a Veil over past Follies. *And it infallibly* provokes Requital with a Vengeance ; for seeing nothing is more tender and sensible than this point of Reputation, there is no doubt but those who find they shall

shall be admitted to no Propitiation, will endeavour to extenuate their own guilt, by rendring others as black as themselves; and being debarr'd the most natural and humane way of Satisfaction, will right themselves upon such implacable Men by way of Reprisal. And who is there that hath not Spots enough, if Envy pry into them, and whole Blemishes will not look hideously, if Malice survey them? And who will not seem an ugly Monster, if he be not only placed in a bad Light, but his Picture be drawn by ill Nature in Gall and Soot? And who is there so destitute of these Instruments of Revenge, if Despair put him upon doing his worst? Who is there that hath not been mistaken in his Youth? Who hath not been tempted, surprized, abused, one time or other? Who hath not had his Prejudices of Education, or been overseen in the management of himself? Who hath not been over-reach'd and impos'd upon by cunning Men? or not confounded by the several Traverses of State, and Revolutions of the World? So that if it must be the way of the World everlastingly to blazon one another's Follies, it will come to pass,

pass, that he that is best conceited of himself, will find he must fall in his value, and that he will not pass current at the Rate he sets upon himself. But especially it will happen, that he who, to ostentate his own Innocency, is continually pointing at the Failings of others, will find in his Accounts, that he hath been as improvident for himself, as he was inexorable towards others.

But that which I am obliged to observe in this case, and that in order to the Cure of this Distemper, is only the plain Injustice and Inequality of this way of proceeding, even upon the Principles of every Man's own Heart ; for it is indubitable that every Man would be desirous that his blind side should be concealed, that a Veil should be drawn over his Blemishes, and that an Act of Oblivion should pass upon his former Miscarriages ; and besides, he thinks it very unjust that other Men should represent him by the Follies he hath outgrown, and charge him with the Opinions he hath abandon'd, or upbraid him with the Actions he hath repented of : And he would be taken for what he is, and not what he was. Therefore, upon the Rule of Equity, thus should

it be done by every Man towards his Neighbour.

Eighthly and Lastly, and to conclude this Point: The studying of this one Aphorism (of *doing as we would be done by*) would prevent all the Frauds, Cheatings and Oppressions that are so great an Evil to the World, and which are otherwise scarcely to be cured or restrained by all the Laws, Judicatories and Punishments that Men can devise; for this defines them, detects, convicts, condemns and shames them at a Bar which no Man can Appeal from, or Except against. In Humane Judicatories Men may hope to conceal their Mis-carriages, or to excuse, or to palliate, or to out-face them; either by defect of Evidence to escape the Trial, or by the advantage of Wit, or Money, or Power, or Friends, to elude the Judgment; some Cases the Law cannot reach, or the Witnesses cannot depose and swear home to the Point, or the Jury cannot penetrate into the Mystery of the Business: But here *quid prodest non habere conscium, habenti conscientiam?* There will want no Witnesses, no Inquest, no Judge, but a Man's own self; and he that is faulty, his own Heart shall

shall upbraid him, for debauching his own Principles, and his Countenance shall fall, and his Spirit sink under the Sentence.

No Man that consults this Oracle will find in his heart to oppress his Neighbour by Power and Interest, or vex him with Law-Suits, or undermine him by Fraud, or over-reach him by tricks of Wit, or make Advantage of the Weakness, Simplicity, Necessity or Security of his Neighbour. No Man's Table will be made a Snare to him ; no Man will flatter his Friend, to circumvent him, or make use of *Summum Jus*, and the rigour of Laws, to ruine his very Enemy ; or if he do, this Court of Equity within him will reverse the Proceedings, and severely revenge the contempt of its Authority. This Principle (I say) of *Self-Love* which sticks close to our Natures, and is always before our Eyes, if it be but applied to the case of other Men, after the manner we have express'd, will determine us to just and righteous, to fair and candid and ingenuous Dealings : For whatsoever I would not that others should do to me, that I must not do towards them. And so much for that.

5. Fifthly, *I come now in the last place, and for a Conclusion of all, to represent some of the happy Advantages of pursuing this Rule, as so many Motives to the careful observance of it. And out of many of this kind that lie obvious to my Thoughts, I will only select these Three following :*

1. Though it be true, (as I have noted before,) That this Maxim is not properly a Rule of Religion or Devotion towards God, but only the Measure of the Second Table ; yet it is of so great Reputation and Authority, that it gives the Publick Stamp and Value to Piety and Devotion it self, forasmuch as without there be a conspicuous regard to this Rule in our intercourse with Men, the most glorious Pretences of Piety towards God signifie nothing either with God or Men. A mighty Zeal in Disputing and Contending about Opinions, without regard to Equity and Justice and Mercy, is but a kind of Religious Knight-Errantry, and Men encounter only Windmills and Pageants; they neither Honour God, nor Profit the World, nor gain Reputation to themselves : Nay, I think such Zeal will

will not be much undervalued, if it be resembled to *Solomon's* doting Expeditions, when he made long Voyages for Apes and Peacocks. To be wonderfully Devout in a peculiar Form or Mode of Worship, without Honesty and Ingenuity in our Dealings with Men, will be look'd upon as the Hypocritical acting of a Part, or at best as being bigotted to a certain Mode, without any true Notion or Sense of Religion. In a word, To make the most glorious Profession, and to espouse the precisest Sect and Party, without an equal regard to this, will at least be look'd upon as an effect of Pride and Singularity, and be more than suspected as a Cloak for Knavery. For of all Religions in the World, Christianity is that of all other, which he can make the least pretence to, who *Tythes Mint, and Annis, and Cummin, and neglects the* ^{Mat. 22.} *weightier matters of Faith, Justice and* ^{23.} *Mercy.* Our Saviour himself hath told us, That God *loves Mercy more than* ^{Mat. 9. 13.} *Sacrifice*; and is better pleased with our equitable dealing with our Neighbour, than with the most costly Oblations to Himself. And his Apostle St. James declares, That *pure Religion,* ^{Jam. 1. 27.}

Am. May-
cellinus.

and undefiled before God and the Father, is, to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, &c. Nay, an Heathen, but an ingenuous Observer of the *Genius* of the Christian Religion, gives this Account of it, *Nil nisi justum suadet & leve*, That there was nothing so remarkable in that Institution, as the Justice, Mildness, Clemency and Equity it requires of all its Profelytes.

It is a memorable Passage we have in *Tertullian*, one of the ancientest Writers in the Christian Church ; some of the Heathens of that Time upbraided the Christians, That they took up their Religion to save Charges, and made choice not of the best, but the cheapest way of Worship ; “ For (say they) you “ refuse to sacrifice to our Gods, for “ no other reason but to spare the Cost “ of the Oblations ; and the Trade and “ Customs of the Eastern Commodities, “ of rich Gums and Spices, decays, by “ your refraining to expend them in “ Incense to the Deity : so that not “ only Religion is less magnificent, but “ the Emperor’s Exchequer is dam- “ nified by your frugal way of Devotion.” To this *Tertullian* answers, in the Name of the Christians ; *’Tis true, we do not*
evapo-

evaporate so much of our Wealth in the vain Superstition of Odours and Perfumes, but we spend more in Acts of Charity towards the Poor and Necessitous, than all your Devotion amounts to ; and this we look upon as a more acceptable Sacrifice, and a sweeter Odour to the Almighty. And besides, we do indeed spend more of those very Commodities in the Burial and decent Treating our deceased Friends, than you do in all your Idolatries. And as for the Emperor's Exchequer, it gains more by our Honesty and Integrity, and the Conscience we make of Defrauding it, than by your lavish and expensive Superstition, who thus think to bribe your Gods, that you may be allowed to cheat your Prince.

Certainly there is nothing like downright Honesty, to give Reputation to Religion ; insomuch that it is not only the most popular Argument in the World to recommend it by, but it is able to persuade a Man to the most improbable Doctrine (otherwise) if he could be convinced that this is the fruit of it. But, on the other side, when Men shall highly pretend to Devotion, and yet appear not only disingenuous and unjust, but unmerciful, cruel, and sanguinary too, an indifferent Man will

be tempted to be of that poor *Indian's* mind, who would not go to Heaven, when he was told that such a sort of Men were there.

2. The Observation of this Rule is so considerable, and so acceptable with God, that it seems to be the most effectual way to obtain success in our Prayers and Addresses to him. For it is remarkable, that upon that very occasion this Aphorism was delivered by our Saviour in the foremention'd place, *Mat. 7.* where, when he had said, *ver. 7. Ask, and it shall be given you, &c.* and *ver. 11. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him;* he there immediately adds, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.* As if by those words [*men do unto you*] he had meant (according to the usual way of expression in the Hebrew Tongue) indefinitely, and had said, *Whatsoever ye would have to be done unto you, either from God or Man.* Or more at large, as if our Saviour had said, *Do ye to Men, as you desire God should do to you; for by the measures*
you

you use towards one another, ye do (upon the matter) prescribe to your selves what measure ye are to expect from him.

To this purpose it is further observable, that in our *Lord's Prayer* we are taught to use this Argument with God Almighty, *To forgive us our trespasses, for that we forgive them that trespass against us : For* (saith our Saviour) *if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive yours.*

Moreover, it is yet further observable, that in the Old Testament, particularly *Deut. 26. 12.* God gives the People of *Israel* warrant to plead with him in their Addresses, and to challenge a Blessing from him, upon the Condition of their having discharged their part in Justice, Charity and Humanity towards their Brethren : For thus he speaks, *When thou hast made an end of thy tything of the third year, and hast given it to the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, then thou shalt plead before the Lord, &c. Look down now from thy habitation, and bless thy people Israel.* But most fully and expressly is this set out in the New Testament, *Luke 6. 38.* where, after our Saviour had

had specified several Instances of Equity and Humanity, as *Love your enemies, and do good; Give to him that asketh; Lend* (to Men in necessity) *looking for nothing again; Be merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful; he adds, Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you; Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together.* He concludes all with the assurance of the success of this course, *For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*

But to conclude all, Whatever be the Success or Advantages of observing this Rule, otherwise, a Man shall be sure to reap the Fruit of inward Peace and Comfort and Satisfaction in so doing: Nor will it be in the Power of Chance, or the Event of Things, to discompose him; for whatever may happen, or how malicious interpretations soever may be made of a Man's Actions, yet whilst he is sure he hath been true to his own Conscience, and the aforesaid Principle, he is not only above the Malice and Follies of Men, but above Fear and Suspicion of Mischief to befall him. Or if he chance
to

to meet with ill treatment from Men, he can easily bear it, because he is sure he hath not deserved it. So that the Retreat into a Man's self, is the great Refuge from Troubles abroad; and the Reflection upon a Man's Integrity in this great Point, is the principal Consolation of Humane Life.

With this holy *Job* comforted himself in his Adversity, *Job* 29. 12. *I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widows heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it cloathed me; and my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out. I brake the jaws of the wicked, and I pluckt the prey out of his teeth, &c.* In all which, that good Man elegantly sets forth the great Support and Comfort it afforded him now in his Adversity, That he had heretofore, in his Prosperity, dealt equitably and mercifully, and considered other Men's Cases as his own.

And

And after this rate *David* also comforts himself in his Troubles, *Psal.* 35. 12. *They rewarded me evil for good : But as for me, when they were sick, my cloathing was sackcloth ; I behaved my self as if it had been my friend, or my brother : and then appeals to God hereupon, ver. 24. Judge me, O Lord, according to thy righteousness.*

On the other side, it will be an horrible Aggravation of our Trouble, when Adversity befalls us, if we shall have just cause to make this Reflection ;
' Thus and thus I dealt with others
' when I was in Prosperity, and now
' it is come home to me ; I had no
' sense of Equity and Humanity towards
' others then, and I must now just-
' ly expect they will have as little to-
' wards me.

Doubtless, it was no small Anguish *Adonibezek* was under, *Judg.* 1. 7. when his Guilt extorted this sad Acknowledgment from him, *Threescore and ten Kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table : As I have done, so God hath requited me : q. d.* In my Prosperity I was so vain and improvident, as either to forget that I was but a Man, or that others were
so

so too : I neither considered the parity of Humane Nature, nor the mutability of Humane Affairs : I was so sottishly insolent then, as to treat my Equals like Dogs ; and how can I now expect they should treat me like a Man ? Certainly it was an heavy Aggravation of *Haman's* Shame and Sufferings (in the Book of *Esther*) that he must be hanged on the same Gallows he had provided for the pious, but brow-beaten *Mordecai*. And *Perillus* roared most hideously, when he was roasted in the brazen Bull which he had devised for the Torture of others. And, to add no more Examples of this kind, we may easily bethink our selves, what a dreadful Remorse and horrible Agony of Mind *Joseph's* Brethren were in, *Gen. 42. 21.* when they themselves came to be in straits, and reflect upon their former unnatural dealing with their Brother, they cry out one to another, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us.* It is therefore all the Wisdom and Reason in the World, since we know not how soon it may be our turn to be at
the

the lower part of the Wheel, to temper our selves with Equity and Moderation whilst we are uppermost, according to the Counsel of our Saviour, *To make us friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness;* and then, *to do to others, as at another time we would wish and think fit they should do by us :* Which was the Point I began with, and with which I now make an end.

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